

UNIVERSITY OF EDUCATION, WINNEBA
FACULTY OF SOCIAL SCIENCES
DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL STUDIES EDUCATION.

**AN INVESTIGATION INTO THE PHENOMENON OF TRUANCY AT THE
TECHIMAN ISLAMIC JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL**



GEORGE FOSU

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**Dissertation submitted to the Department of Social Sciences,
University of Education Winneba,**

**in partial fulfilment of the requirements for
the award of a Master of Education Social Studies.**

SEPTEMBER, 2024

DECLARATION

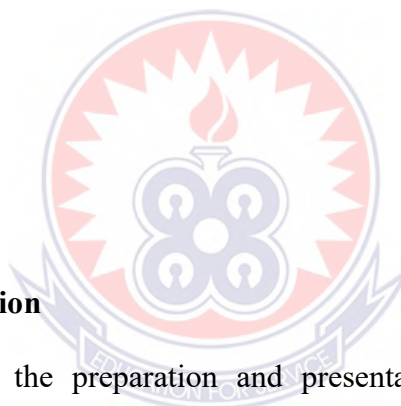
Candidate's Declaration

I hereby declare that this project work is the result of my own original research and that no part of it has been presented for another degree in this university or elsewhere.

Candidate's Name:

Candidate's Signature:

Date:



Supervisor's Declaration

I hereby declare that the preparation and presentation of the dissertation were supervised in accordance with the guidelines on dissertation supervision laid down by the University of Education Winneba.

Supervisor's Name:

Supervisor's Signature:

Date:

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To begin with, I would like to express my wakeless gratitude to the Almighty God for seeing me through the course successfully. I am also grateful to my supervisor, Dr. Ignatius Joseph Obeng, for his patience, guidance and constructive criticisms of this work which enabled me get on my toes to do the needful. His expertise and encouragement can never be ignored in this research work.

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Finally, I wish to acknowledge other individuals who helped me in one way or the other in making this dissertation a success.



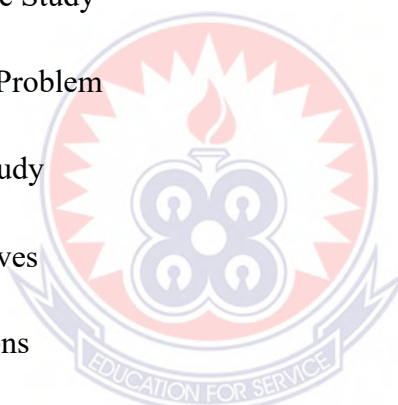
DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to my grandmother, Madam Mary Amoah.



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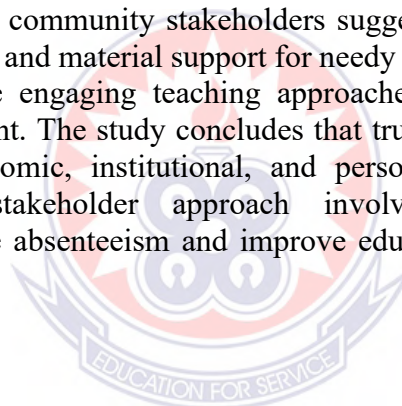
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ABSTRACT

This study explored the phenomenon of truancy at the Techiman Islamic Junior High School, focusing on its underlying causes, its effects on students' academic outcomes and educational attainment, and strategies for addressing it. A mixed-methods research design was employed, combining quantitative and qualitative approaches to provide a comprehensive understanding of the issue. The study population comprised all students and teaching staff of the school. A sample of 97 students was selected through stratified and simple random sampling, while 10 teachers and a headteacher were purposively chosen for interviews. In addition, five focus group discussions, each consisting of six to eight students, were conducted to capture collective experiences and insights. Data were collected using a structured questionnaire, a semi-structured interview guide, and a focus group discussion guide. The reliability of the questionnaire was established with a Cronbach's alpha value of 0.76, indicating acceptable internal consistency. The findings revealed that truancy is driven by multiple factors, including financial hardship, parental neglect, household responsibilities, uninspiring teaching methods, and peer influence. Truancy was also shown to negatively affect students' academic performance, leading to poor assessment results, reduced classroom engagement, and in some cases, long-term academic failure and dropout. To mitigate these challenges, students, teachers, and community stakeholders suggested interventions such as free school meals, financial and material support for needy students, strengthened guidance and counselling, more engaging teaching approaches, and enhanced parental and community involvement. The study concludes that truancy is a multifaceted problem shaped by socio-economic, institutional, and personal factors. It recommends a collaborative, multi-stakeholder approach involving schools, families, and communities to reduce absenteeism and improve educational outcomes in Ghanaian junior high schools.



CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background to the Study

Education is a fundamental human right and a key driver of individual and national development, equipping learners with knowledge and skills necessary for participation in social, economic, and civic life. One of the fundamental pillars for educational success is regular school attendance. When students consistently attend school, they benefit from continuity in instruction, better classroom engagement, and improved academic outcomes. However, truancy, defined as habitual and unauthorised absenteeism from school without valid justification poses a major challenge to achieving quality education in many basic schools in Ghana (Gyan, 2013). This phenomenon affects not only academic performance but also contributes to broader social issues such as juvenile delinquency, school dropout, and reduced future employment opportunities.

The issue of truancy is particularly acute in under-resourced communities where socioeconomic pressures, parental disengagement, and limited educational support systems prevail. National education data indicates persistent challenges with school attendance: the Ghana Education Service (GES) reported that average basic school absenteeism remains between 15%-25% across multiple regions, undermining learning continuity and contributing to widening achievement gaps (GES, 2022). In some rural circuits, chronic absenteeism has been associated with increased rates of dropout and underperformance on national examinations.

Techiman Islamic Junior High School, located in the Bono East Region, exhibits similar patterns. Recent records obtained from the Techiman Municipal Education Directorate show a notable decline in regular student attendance, with over 120 students missing school for extended periods in the last academic year, and more than 70 students absent from the most recent Basic Education Certificate Examination (BECE) due to prolonged truancy (GES Municipal Report, 2023). Local stakeholders attribute this trend to entrenched challenges such as poverty, parental neglect, child labour, and peer influence, further exacerbated by limited school resources and support structures.

These trends align with broader national observations that students from economically vulnerable homes face higher risks of absenteeism (UNICEF Ghana, 2019). Without a contextualised understanding of truancy's root causes and its impact, interventions remain generic and less effective. This underscores the urgency of this study to systematically investigate truancy at Techiman Islamic JHS and identify context-specific strategies to support regular attendance.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Truancy remains a pervasive challenge in many basic schools across Ghana, including Techiman Islamic Junior High School. Despite the government's commitment to achieving universal basic education and implementing interventions such as the Free Compulsory Universal Basic Education (FCUBE) policy, absenteeism continues to hinder student academic achievement and educational progression (Ministry of Education, 2019). School records and reports indicate persistent irregular attendance patterns among pupils. In the 2022/2023 academic year alone, over 120 students were documented as frequently absent, and more than 70 eligible candidates failed to sit for

the BECE examination due to chronic truancy, highlighting the severity of the problem at this school level.

Although the school authority has adopted disciplinary measures aimed at curbing absenteeism, these have not yielded significant improvements, suggesting that truancy's root causes are complex and multifactorial. Anecdotal evidence from teachers, students, and parents points to factors such as poverty, limited parental supervision, peer influence, and low student motivation as contributing drivers. However, the absence of empirical, context-specific data undermines the design of effective interventions tailored to the local context.

Moreover, the consequences of truancy extend beyond individual academic failure. Chronic absenteeism disrupts the learning environment, places additional pressure on teachers, and leads to the misallocation of teaching and learning resources (Kearney, 2016). When a significant number of students are frequently absent, it becomes challenging for teachers to maintain lesson continuity and classroom discipline. In turn, this affects the performance of even regular attendees and undermines the overall educational goals of the institution. Additionally, students who are truant are more likely to engage in risky behaviours, including substance abuse, petty crimes, and teenage pregnancy, further compounding the problem (Henry & Huizinga, 2007). National education research further suggests that persistent truancy increases the risk of students engaging in at-risk behaviours such as substance use, juvenile delinquency, and school dropout (Maynard et al., 2018). At Techiman Islamic JHS, these trends threaten not only individual student futures but also the broader goals of equitable and quality education.

Despite the recurring nature of truancy at Techiman Islamic JHS, there is a notable gap in localised research that explores the specific causes, consequences, and possible solutions within this particular school setting. Without such context-specific insight, school authorities and policymakers are left to rely on general assumptions, which does not effectively address the unique challenges faced by students in Techiman. Thus, this study seeks to fill that gap by conducting a systematic investigation into the phenomenon of truancy at the school. The findings are expected to inform practical strategies that can reduce absenteeism, improve academic performance, and enhance overall school engagement.

1.3 Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to assess the underlying causes, prevalence, and effects of truancy among students at Techiman Islamic Junior High School, with the aim of identifying context-specific factors contributing to absenteeism and proposing interventions that can enhance student attendance, improve academic performance, and support the overall effectiveness of teaching and learning in the school.

1.4 Research Objectives

The objectives of the study were to:

1. examine the causes of truancy among the students at the Techiman Islamic Junior High School.
2. examine the effects of truancy on students' academic outcome and educational attainment.
3. propose strategies that can be implemented in the Techiman Islamic Junior High School to improve school attendance.

1.5 Research Questions

The study was based on the following research questions:

1. What are major causes of truancy among students at the Techiman Islamic Junior High School?
2. How does truancy affect students' academic outcome and educational attainment?
3. What strategies can be implemented by the school authorities to reduce truancy and improve student attendance at the school?

1.6 Significance of the Study

This study is significant because it addresses a persistent and critical challenge, i.e., truancy, that undermines the educational goals of Techiman Islamic Junior High School and the broader objectives of Ghana's basic education system. Understanding the causes and consequences of truancy is essential for ensuring that all students have equal access to quality education, a fundamental human right and a vital contributor to national development. The findings of this research will provide valuable insights that can help teachers, parents, policymakers, and the wider community develop more effective interventions to curb truancy and promote regular school attendance.

For headteachers and teachers, the study will serve as a practical guide to understanding why students are frequently absent from school and how such absenteeism affects classroom dynamics, instructional delivery, and overall academic performance. Teachers will be better equipped to detect early warning signs of truancy and to apply appropriate classroom management and engagement strategies tailored to the specific needs of students who are at risk. It will also help school heads and educational

stakeholders to develop a more comprehensive student support system, including counselling, mentoring, and attendance monitoring programmes.

The study is also significant to parents and guardians, as it will highlight their crucial role in ensuring regular school attendance. Parental neglect or lack of involvement is often cited as one of the leading causes of truancy. This research will therefore raise awareness among parents about the importance of monitoring their children's attendance and collaborating with schools to support their academic success. Additionally, the study will offer practical recommendations to help parents foster a more education-friendly environment at home by identifying specific home and community-related factors contributing to truancy.

At the policy level, the study will contribute to the body of empirical evidence needed by the Ghana Education Service (GES) and other relevant agencies to design targeted policies and programmes aimed at reducing school absenteeism. Given that existing policies like the Free Compulsory Universal Basic Education (FCUBE) have not completely eliminated barriers to attendance, this study will provide localised data that can inform future interventions, particularly in rural and Islamic school contexts where socio-cultural factors play a significant role.

Finally, for researchers and academics, the study will add to the growing body of literature on truancy in Ghana and serve as a reference point for future studies in similar educational settings. It will help bridge the gap between theory and practice by offering grounded, context-specific solutions to a widespread educational issue. This study has the potential to positively impact educational outcomes, student welfare, and community development in Techiman and beyond.

1.7 Delimitation of the Study

This study is specifically delimited to investigating the phenomenon of truancy among students at Techiman Islamic Junior High School, located in the Techiman Municipality of the Bono East Region of Ghana. The research focuses solely on this particular school due to its observable challenges with student attendance and the lack of sufficient data on truancy in Islamic-based public junior high schools within the region. By narrowing the scope to a single school, the study aims to gather detailed, context-specific insights that can lead to practical, actionable interventions.

The study will be limited to students, teachers, and headteachers within the school environment. These groups have been selected because they are the primary stakeholders directly affected by and involved in managing issues of truancy. Students are the subjects of investigation, as they are the ones whose attendance patterns are being examined. Teachers and headteachers, on the other hand, provide critical perspectives on how absenteeism affects teaching and learning processes, classroom behaviour, and overall school performance. Parents and guardians, though indirectly influential, will not be the primary focus due to constraints related to time and access.

Additionally, the study will focus on identifying the causes, effects, and possible solutions to truancy within the specific context of Techiman Islamic JHS. It will not attempt to compare the prevalence or nature of truancy across other schools in the municipality or region, as that would require a broader scope and more extensive resources. The study is not designed to explore national trends or policy-level impacts in depth but will rather seek to provide grounded evidence that will later contribute to broader educational discourse.

Another delimitation of the study is the academic timeframe within which it is conducted. The research will focus on data gathered during a specific academic year, which limits the ability to account for seasonal or long-term patterns of absenteeism. Factors such as festivals, farming seasons, or economic shifts that affect student attendance across multiple years will be acknowledged but not explored in depth due to time limitations.

Finally, the study is delimited by the research methodology chosen. A mixed-methods approach, primarily involving questionnaires and interviews, will be used to collect data. While this approach offers both quantitative and qualitative insights, it does not capture all nuanced psychological or sociological dimensions of truancy, which might require more specialised tools such as psychological assessments or longitudinal studies.

1.8 Limitations of the Study

While this study aims to provide valuable insights into the phenomenon of truancy at Techiman Islamic Junior High School, several limitations affect the scope, depth, and generalisability of its findings. One major limitation is the restricted geographical focus. The research is confined to only one school within the Techiman Municipality, which means that the results does not reflect the experiences or realities of students in other junior high schools, especially those in different socio-economic, cultural, or religious settings. As a result, caution must be exercised in applying the findings to broader populations beyond the study location.

Another limitation lies in the availability and reliability of data, especially from students. Since truancy is often linked to personal, familial, or behavioural issues, some respondents may be reluctant to provide honest or complete answers due to fear of

stigmatisation or disciplinary consequences. Similarly, students may underreport their absenteeism or provide socially desirable responses, which could affect the accuracy of the data collected. To minimise this risk, assurances of confidentiality and anonymity will be provided; however, the potential for biased responses remains a concern.

Time constraints also present a limitation. The study is to be conducted within a limited academic period, which does not allow for extensive follow-up or longitudinal tracking of students' attendance patterns. Truancy, in many cases, is a long-term behaviour that evolves over time due to shifting personal or environmental factors. The short duration of the research may limit the ability to capture such long-term trends or outcomes.

Additionally, the study may face logistical and administrative challenges. Access to official attendance records and permission to conduct interviews with students and staff will be delayed or restricted, potentially limiting the scope of the data collection process. Moreover, unforeseen events such as school closures, public holidays, or examination periods interfered with scheduled data-gathering activities.

Lastly, the study is limited by the methodological tools used, primarily questionnaires and interviews. While these tools are effective for gathering perceptions and experiences, they may not capture deeper psychological or systemic issues contributing to truancy. More advanced or diversified research methods, such as ethnographic studies or psychological assessments, though ideal, fall outside the scope and resources of this particular study.

Despite these limitations, every effort will be made to ensure the reliability and validity of the research findings.

1.9 Definition of Terms

The following key terms are defined as used within the context of this research to ensure clarity and consistency throughout the study:

Truancy: Truancy refers to the act of a student being absent from school without permission from parents, guardians, or school authorities and without any legitimate excuse. It is typically considered an unauthorised or habitual absence that disrupts the learning process (Kearney, 2016).

Junior high school (JHS): This refers to the second cycle of basic education in Ghana, typically comprising three academic years (JHS1 to JHS3) for students aged approximately 12 to 15 years. It serves as a preparatory stage for senior high school or vocational training.

Techiman Islamic Junior High School: This is a public junior high school located in the Techiman Municipality of the Bono East Region of Ghana. The school is recognised for offering formal education within an Islamic-oriented learning environment and is the specific setting for this research.

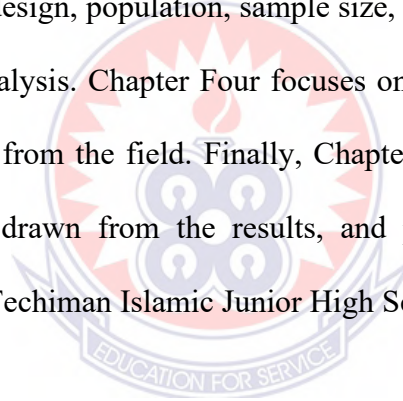
Absenteeism: Absenteeism, in the context of this study, refers broadly to the practice of students missing school, whether excused or unexcused. However, the study places greater emphasis on unexcused absenteeism, which is synonymous with truancy.

Stakeholders: Stakeholders are individuals or groups who have an interest in the educational outcomes of students. In this study, the stakeholders included

students, teachers, headteachers, parents/guardians, and educational policymakers who are directly or indirectly involved in addressing truancy.

1.10 Organisation of the Study

This study is organised into five chapters. Chapter One concentrates on the introduction, and discusses the background to the study, statement of the problem, purpose, objectives, research questions, significance, delimitation, limitations, definition of terms, and organisation of the study. Chapter Two presents a review of relevant literature, covering theoretical framework, empirical studies, and conceptual discussions related to truancy. Chapter Three outlines the research methodology, detailing the research design, population, sample size, data collection instruments, and procedures for data analysis. Chapter Four focuses on the presentation, analysis, and discussion of findings from the field. Finally, Chapter Five offers a summary of the findings, conclusions drawn from the results, and practical recommendations for addressing truancy at Techiman Islamic Junior High School.



CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

This chapter presents a review of literature of relevant to the study. The literature is reviewed under the following sub-topics:

2.2 Theoretical Framework

To understand the phenomenon of truancy among students at Techiman Islamic Junior High School, it is essential to ground the study in relevant theoretical perspectives. This section explores two key theories that provide a comprehensive lens through which truancy can be examined: Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory and Travis Hirschi's Social Control Theory. These theories help explain the multifaceted nature of truancy by highlighting the interplay between individual, familial, school, and societal factors.

2.2.1 The Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory

The Urie Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory (1979) posits that human development is influenced by the different types of environmental systems that interact with each other and the individual over time. The theory is structured around five interrelated systems: the microsystem, mesosystem, exosystem, macrosystem, and chronosystem. Each system represents a layer of influence that contributes to a child's behaviour, including decisions around school attendance.

The microsystem, the most immediate environment, includes settings such as the home, school, and peer group. For a student at Techiman Islamic Junior High School, the

quality of relationships with teachers, parents, and peers plays a crucial role in determining engagement with school activities. A dysfunctional home environment, lack of parental supervision, or negative peer influence contributes significantly to truancy (Gaffney, Ttofi and Farrington, 2021).

The mesosystem reflects the interactions between components of the microsystem, for example, the relationship between home and school. If parents are not involved in their child's education or do not communicate with teachers, students may lack the motivation or accountability required to attend school regularly. This is particularly relevant in rural Ghanaian settings, where parental engagement with formal education is limited by illiteracy or economic constraints (Ampiah & Adu-Yeboah, 2009).

The exosystem includes broader social systems that do not directly involve the student but still influence their development. These include the parent's workplace or community organisations. In cases where parents work long hours or are frequently absent from home due to economic demands, their ability to monitor and support school attendance is diminished.

The macrosystem involves the wider cultural values, laws, and customs. In Techiman, socio-cultural factors such as early child labour, gender norms, or undervaluing of formal education, especially for girls, contribute to persistent absenteeism. Bronfenbrenner (1979) emphasises that the macrosystem shapes attitudes and expectations that, in turn, influence parental decisions and student behaviours.

Finally, the chronosystem encompasses the dimension of time. It considers changes over time, such as family transitions (e.g., divorce, migration), socio-economic shifts, or educational reforms. For instance, economic hardships intensified by recent global

or national crises may lead to increased student absenteeism as children are compelled to help at home or earn income.

Bronfenbrenner's theory, thus, provides a holistic framework that underscores how truancy is not simply an individual choice but the outcome of interacting systems that shape student behaviour. It is especially relevant in the context of Techiman Islamic JHS, where cultural, economic, and social structures play a significant role in influencing student attendance.

2.2.2 The Travis Hirschi's Social Control Theory

Travis Hirschi's Social Control Theory (1969) offers another useful framework for understanding why students may engage in deviant behaviours such as truancy. The theory posits that people refrain from deviant acts due to the strength of their social bonds. When these bonds are weak or broken, individuals are more likely to violate societal norms. Hirschi identifies four critical elements of social bonding: attachment, commitment, involvement, and belief.

Attachment refers to the emotional closeness an individual feels toward others, particularly parents, teachers, and peers. When students have strong relationships with caring adults and feel accepted in the school environment, they are more likely to conform to school rules and expectations. Conversely, students who feel alienated or unloved are more likely to skip school. This is particularly relevant in communities where parental neglect, lack of teacher-student rapport, or peer pressure contribute to disengagement from formal education (Henry & Huizinga, 2007).

Commitment involves the investment an individual has in conventional goals such as academic success and future career aspirations. Students who see education as a path

to success are less likely to be truant, while those who perceive school as irrelevant or unattainable are more likely to disengage. In the Techiman context, students from low-income families may view education as secondary to immediate income-generating activities, thereby weakening their commitment to academic goals.

Involvement refers to participation in conventional activities like attending classes, engaging in school clubs, or studying. According to Hirschi, the more time individuals spend in such activities, the less time they have to engage in deviant behaviour. If students lack opportunities for extracurricular involvement or find school activities unengaging, they may resort to skipping school as an alternative form of social interaction or escape from boredom (Garry, 1996).

Belief entails an individual's acceptance of the norms and values of society. Students who believe in the value of education and the legitimacy of school rules are more likely to attend regularly. In contrast, those who question the fairness or relevance of the educational system may become truant. In some Ghanaian communities, where traditional vocations or informal apprenticeships are valued over formal schooling, students may not internalise the importance of regular attendance (Palinkas, 2015).

Hirschi's theory is particularly useful in highlighting how truancy stems from a breakdown in the social bonds that typically guide behaviour. It also provides a basis for targeted interventions aimed at strengthening these bonds through mentoring programmes, parental engagement, or creating a more inclusive school environment to reduce absenteeism.

Both Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory and Hirschi's Social Control Theory offer valuable perspectives for analysing the causes of truancy at Techiman

Islamic Junior High School. While Bronfenbrenner emphasises the broader ecological context ranging from the family and school to the larger societal values, Hirschi focuses on the individual's internalisation of social norms and the strength of their relationships with key institutions. Together, these theories provide a robust theoretical foundation for investigating the phenomenon of truancy, offering insights that can inform both the analysis of data and the development of practical interventions tailored to the school's unique social and cultural context.

2.3 The Concept of Truancy

Truancy refers to the habitual or intentional absence of a student from school without valid justification, parental consent, or school approval. It is widely considered an early indicator of potential academic failure, school dropout, and future delinquent behaviour (Gottfried & Gee, 2018). Unlike occasional absenteeism due to illness or family emergencies, truancy is characterised by frequent and unauthorised absences that typically reflect a deeper disengagement from the educational process. According to the Ghana Education Service (GES), truancy undermines classroom learning and creates disciplinary challenges that hinder both individual academic achievement and school-wide performance (GES, 2019).

Truancy is influenced by a complex interplay of factors including family background, peer influence, school climate, and socio-economic conditions. Students skip school due to negative peer pressure, lack of interest in academic activities, hostile relationships with teachers, or the need to support household income through petty trading or farming. In Ghanaian contexts, particularly in semi-urban and rural areas like Techiman, truancy is sometimes linked to systemic challenges such as poverty, poor school infrastructure, and parental neglect (Afful-Broni & Sekyi 2014).

Globally, educational researchers argue that truancy is both a symptom and a cause of wider social problems. It is a response to personal challenges such as mental health issues, bullying, or domestic instability, while simultaneously increasing a student's risk of academic underperformance and social marginalisation (Lovelace, Reschly, & Appleton, 2018). Consequently, understanding the concept of truancy in local contexts is essential for designing effective school-based interventions that address its root causes and long-term consequences.

2.4 Causes of Truancy

Truancy is a multifaceted issue influenced by a variety of personal, familial, school-related, and societal factors. Understanding the root causes of truancy is essential for addressing the problem effectively, especially in contexts like Techiman Islamic JHS where socio-economic and cultural dynamics strongly influence students' behaviour.

One of the primary causes of truancy is poverty and its associated pressures. Many students in Techiman come from low-income households where they are expected to contribute to family income through farming, trading, or household chores. This economic burden often forces children to miss school in order to support their families (Afful-Broni & Sekyi 2014). Additionally, the cost of school-related expenses such as uniforms, textbooks, and transportation, even when basic education is supposedly free, can discourage regular attendance, especially among children from disadvantaged backgrounds (GES, 2019).

Parental neglect and lack of involvement in children's education also contribute significantly to truancy. When parents do not value formal education or fail to monitor their children's attendance and performance, students are more likely to skip school (Lovelace, Reschly, & Appleton, 2018). Moreover, in homes where there is little

supervision or where children face domestic violence or emotional neglect, school becomes a low priority.

School-related factors also play a crucial role. These include unengaging teaching methods, poor teacher-student relationships, overcrowded classrooms, and lack of school infrastructure such as libraries and sanitation facilities. When students perceive the school environment as hostile, boring, or irrelevant to their lives, they are more likely to disengage and eventually become truant (Gottfried & Hutt, 2019).

Finally, peer influence and community factors such as exposure to deviant peer groups, lack of community role models, and the prevalence of child labour in the community also contribute to truancy. Students are encouraged by peers to skip school or feel that education has limited value in their context, especially if academic success is not visibly rewarded in the local community (Kpolsovie & Alade, 2018).

2.5 Effects of Truancy on Academic Outcomes and Educational Attainment

Truancy has been widely recognised as a critical barrier to effective learning and overall academic success among students across diverse educational settings. Regular school attendance is vital for mastering academic content, developing study habits, and building social relationships that enhance learning. When students are truant, they miss valuable instructional time, leading to gaps in knowledge, limited participation in classroom activities, and reduced exposure to structured learning environments. According to Gottfried (2018), absenteeism is strongly correlated with lower grades and test scores, as students who are absent lose continuity in their learning and struggle to catch up with their peers. This negative trend is not limited to any one context but has been documented globally, with truancy consistently linked to poor academic outcomes.

One major academic effect of truancy is poor performance in assessments and examinations. Students who frequently miss school are often unable to understand key concepts, complete assignments on time, or prepare adequately for tests. Porter (2024) highlights that chronic absenteeism is a significant predictor of achievement gaps, particularly among students from disadvantaged backgrounds. Missing school reduces the amount of instructional input a student receives, making it difficult for them to progress at the same pace as regular attendees. Over time, this creates a cycle where poor performance further discourages attendance, leading to long-term disengagement from school.

In addition to academic performance, truancy undermines student engagement and participation. Classroom activities, group work, and discussions are critical components of the learning process, and truant students often miss these opportunities. As a result, they tend to feel disconnected from their peers and teachers, which weakens their sense of belonging in school. Anthony and Ogg (2019) argue that absenteeism diminishes students' sense of connectedness to the school community, which in turn reduces motivation and willingness to actively engage in learning. This lack of engagement not only affects individual academic achievement but can also disrupt the broader classroom environment, as teachers may be forced to spend extra time reviewing content for absentees.

Another important consequence of truancy is its strong link to long-term academic failure and dropout. Students who develop persistent patterns of absenteeism are at a higher risk of dropping out of school entirely. Maynard et al. (2018) found that truancy is one of the most consistent predictors of school dropout, which has long-term implications for students' career prospects and socio-economic mobility. Dropping out

due to absenteeism often limits access to higher education and formal employment, perpetuating cycles of poverty and marginalization. In this way, truancy not only affects immediate academic performance but also undermines future life opportunities.

Thus, truancy significantly hampers academic achievement by reducing instructional time, lowering engagement, and increasing the likelihood of school dropout. Its effects are both immediate, such as poor grades and low participation, and long-term, such as limited educational attainment and socio-economic disadvantage.

2.6 Strategies for Addressing Truancy

Effectively addressing truancy requires a multifaceted and collaborative approach that involves schools, families, communities, and relevant government institutions. Research consistently shows that no single strategy can fully eliminate truancy; rather, a combination of preventive, interventionist, and supportive strategies tailored to local contexts is most effective (Gottfried & Gee, 2018).

One proven strategy is the implementation of early identification and intervention systems. Schools must monitor attendance records closely and identify patterns of absenteeism before they develop into chronic truancy. The use of data-driven systems allows teachers and headteachers to flag at-risk students and provide timely support (Lovelace et al., 2018). Once students are identified, schools can engage in personalised interventions such as mentoring, counselling, or academic support programmes.

Parental involvement is another critical strategy. Parents or guardians must be engaged in promoting the importance of education and holding their children accountable for attending school regularly. In Ghana, community education programmes and parent-teacher associations can serve as effective platforms for raising awareness about the

effects of truancy and encouraging active parental engagement (Afful-Broni & Sekyi 2014). Additionally, home visits by school staff to follow up on truant students have shown positive outcomes in re-establishing attendance patterns, particularly in rural and semi-urban areas.

Improving the school environment is equally important. A safe, inclusive, and stimulating school climate can help students feel welcomed and motivated to attend regularly. Teachers play a significant role in this by employing interactive and learner-centered teaching strategies that keep students engaged (Gottfried & Hutt, 2019). Furthermore, the availability of school-based services such as guidance and counselling units can provide psychosocial support to students facing personal or academic challenges that contribute to truancy.

Finally, collaboration with community stakeholders such as religious leaders, local authorities, and NGOs can enhance efforts to address truancy. In areas like Techiman, where cultural and economic factors influence attendance, community involvement ensures that interventions are contextually appropriate and sustainable.

2.7 Empirical Review

Empirical studies on truancy, conducted globally, within Ghana, and across Africa, have provided valuable insights into the causes, effects, and possible solutions to absenteeism in schools. This review critically analyses the methodology, findings, and implications of these studies in relation to the research objectives: (1) examining the causes of truancy, (2) assessing its effects on academic performance, and (3) proposing effective strategies to reduce truancy. By exploring these studies, we can better contextualise the problem of truancy at Techiman Islamic Junior High School and suggest targeted interventions grounded in evidence.

2.7.1 Causes of Truancy

A significant body of research identifies a range of factors contributing to truancy, with socio-economic, psychological, and institutional influences often highlighted as key drivers. For example, Afful-Broni and Sekyi (2014) conducted a study in Ghanaian basic schools and found that poverty, child labour, and domestic responsibilities were leading causes of absenteeism. Children from economically disadvantaged families frequently missed school to engage in farming or assist with family-run businesses. In the context of Techiman, which is a semi-urban area, this finding is particularly relevant as the community faces economic hardship that forces many students to prioritize work over education. Similarly, Alhassan (2018) examined truancy in junior high schools in Ghana and identified lack of parental support and dysfunctional family structures as strong predictors of absenteeism. Students who come from broken homes or lack emotional support were found to be more likely to skip school.

International studies also reinforce these findings. Mireles-Rios, Rios and Reyes (2020) found in their study in the United States that students who lacked emotional support at home and had weak relationships with their teachers were more likely to be truant. This suggests that truancy is not just a result of student behaviour but is deeply connected to broader social and familial dynamics. The findings align with those in Ghana, where economic challenges and family-related factors create an environment conducive to absenteeism. These findings underscore the need for multi-dimensional interventions addressing both personal and socio-economic factors.

2.7.2 Effects of Truancy on Academic Performance

The negative relationship between truancy and academic performance has been extensively documented. Studies consistently report that truancy leads to lower academic achievement, reduced participation in school activities, and higher dropout rates. For instance, Musa and Agi (2024) conducted a study in Nigeria and demonstrated a strong inverse relationship between truancy and academic performance. Truant students had consistently lower test scores compared to their peers with regular attendance. This finding is consistent with Henderson and Fantuzzo (2023) longitudinal study in the United States, which revealed that each day of unexcused absence correlated with lower academic performance in both reading and mathematics. Their study found that students who missed school were less likely to participate in group discussions, complete assignments, and perform well on assessments, which directly impacted their learning outcomes.

In Ghana, Afful-Broni and Sekyi (2014) echoed these findings by noting that students who were truant had lower completion rates and were more likely to drop out of school. Similarly, studies by Henderson and Fantuzzo (2023) confirm that truancy hampers students' ability to keep up with the curriculum and engage meaningfully in academic activities, which leads to academic disengagement and increases the likelihood of school dropout. These studies confirm the second objective of this research: truancy is a significant barrier to academic success and is directly linked to poor student performance, especially in high-stakes examinations like the BECE in Ghana.

2.7.3 Strategies for Addressing Truancy

Empirical research on strategies for reducing truancy emphasises the importance of community collaboration and school-based reforms. Various studies show that early intervention and engagement with parents and communities are essential for tackling truancy. Chen et al. (2016) used latent class analysis to identify absenteeism patterns and test targeted interventions. Their research demonstrated that early intervention programmes involving regular parental contact, attendance monitoring, and mentorship significantly reduced truancy. This aligns with the study's third objective, highlighting the importance of parental involvement and school-community partnerships in addressing absenteeism.

In the Ghanaian context, Atta-Nimoh (2018) found that community involvement plays a crucial role in reducing truancy. Schools that partnered with local leaders and religious groups to raise awareness about the importance of school attendance saw a marked reduction in absenteeism. These findings align with the broader international perspective that community-based interventions can create a sense of collective responsibility toward reducing truancy. Similarly, Afful-Broni and Sekyi (2014) emphasised that structured counselling services and fostering positive teacher-student relationships are essential for motivating students to attend school regularly. This highlights that the solutions to truancy require a holistic, supportive approach rather than punitive measures.

Moreover, a study by Sackey (2007) noted that while policies on school attendance exist, implementation often falls short due to lack of resources, inadequate training, and minimal parental involvement. This reflects a critical gap in policy enforcement and suggests that addressing truancy requires more than just policies; it demands adequate

training, effective implementation, and resource allocation. Similarly, Yawson et al. (2023) observed that even when attendance policies are enforced, follow-up mechanisms are often weak, leading to poor compliance. These findings underscore the need for consistent follow-up and resource allocation at both school and policy levels.

2.7.4 Comparing Findings Across Contexts

Across Ghana, Africa, and international settings, several commonalities emerge in the causes and effects of truancy. The influence of poverty and family-related factors is a consistent theme, as seen in studies conducted both in semi-urban Ghana and rural Africa (Afful-Broni & Sekyi, 2024; Alhasan, 2018). Similarly, peer influence and low student motivation are significant contributors to absenteeism, a finding corroborated by studies in both Ghana and the United States (Mireles-Rios et al., 2020).

However, differences in cultural and institutional contexts can influence the nature of truancy interventions. While community-based solutions such as religious and local leadership involvement work well in Ghanaian settings (Atta-Nimoh, 2018), studies from more developed countries, like the United States, show that structured school-level interventions such as mentoring programmes and data-driven attendance monitoring may be more effective (Chen et al., 2018). Thus, while global research supports common intervention strategies, it is essential to tailor solutions to the local context to ensure their effectiveness.

Thus, the empirical studies reviewed show that truancy is a multifaceted issue, influenced by socio-economic factors, family dynamics, and school-related conditions, both in Ghana and globally. Truancy negatively impacts academic performance, classroom participation, and long-term educational outcomes. The studies also

highlight that early interventions, parental involvement, and community partnerships are the most effective strategies for addressing truancy. However, successful implementation requires overcoming policy gaps and ensuring consistent follow-up and resource allocation. These findings emphasise the importance of developing context-specific strategies at Techiman Islamic Junior High School that align with the findings from both local and international research to effectively reduce truancy and improve academic outcomes.

2.8 Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework for this study is structured around the three core research objectives: (1) identifying the causes of truancy, (2) examining its effects on academic performance, and (3) exploring strategies for addressing the issue. Drawing from the literature and grounded in relevant theoretical insights such as Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory and Hirschi's Social Control Theory, this framework helps to organise and guide the research process, connecting empirical evidence to practical inquiry.

The first objective, which is to identify the causes of truancy, is conceptually anchored in Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory. This theory posits that a child's development and behaviour are influenced by multiple environmental systems ranging from immediate settings like family and school (microsystem), to broader socio-economic conditions (macrosystem) (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). Literature reveals that truancy is often a response to factors at these different levels. For example, family instability, poverty, lack of parental supervision, and peer pressure are frequently cited causes (Afful-Broni & Sekyi 2014; Afriyie, 2020). Within the school environment, issues such as poor teacher-student relationships, unengaging curricula, and lack of

discipline contribute significantly to students skipping classes (Lovelace et al., 2018). These findings guide the development of variables in the study's data collection tools, focusing on personal, familial, institutional, and societal causes of truancy.

The second objective, which is to examine the effects of truancy on academic performance, is supported by empirical research linking absenteeism to lower academic achievement and increased dropout rates. Truancy disrupts learning continuity, reduces instructional time, and limits opportunities for peer interaction and assessment preparation (Gottfried & Hutt, 2019; Omenebele & Jude, 2023). According to Hirschi's Social Control Theory, students who are not adequately bonded to their schools through strong attachments, commitment to learning, and belief in school rules are more likely to become truant (Hirschi, 1969). This theory helps conceptualise the link between disengagement and academic failure. In the context of Techiman Islamic Junior High School, the framework positions academic performance as an outcome variable influenced by both attendance patterns and the student's perceived connection to the school environment.

The third objective, which aims to identify strategies for addressing truancy, draws from both theoretical and empirical literature highlighting the importance of multi-stakeholder interventions. Studies suggest that effective strategies include early identification of at-risk students, school counselling programs, active parental involvement, and community-based interventions (Gottfried & Gee, 2018; Aryeh-Adjei, 2021). Bronfenbrenner's theory supports this systems-based approach, where improvements in multiple layers of the student's environment (family support, school climate, and community engagement) can collectively reduce absenteeism. In the conceptual framework, strategies are viewed as moderating variables that mediate the

relationship between truancy causes and its effects. For example, parental support can buffer the impact of economic hardship, while positive teacher-student relationships can reduce disengagement.

This conceptual framework integrates key theoretical perspectives and empirical evidence to understand truancy as a multi-causal phenomenon with tangible academic consequences and actionable solutions. It structures the investigation by linking causes to effects and aligning strategies to mitigate the problem within the specific socio-cultural and educational context of Techiman Islamic Junior High School.

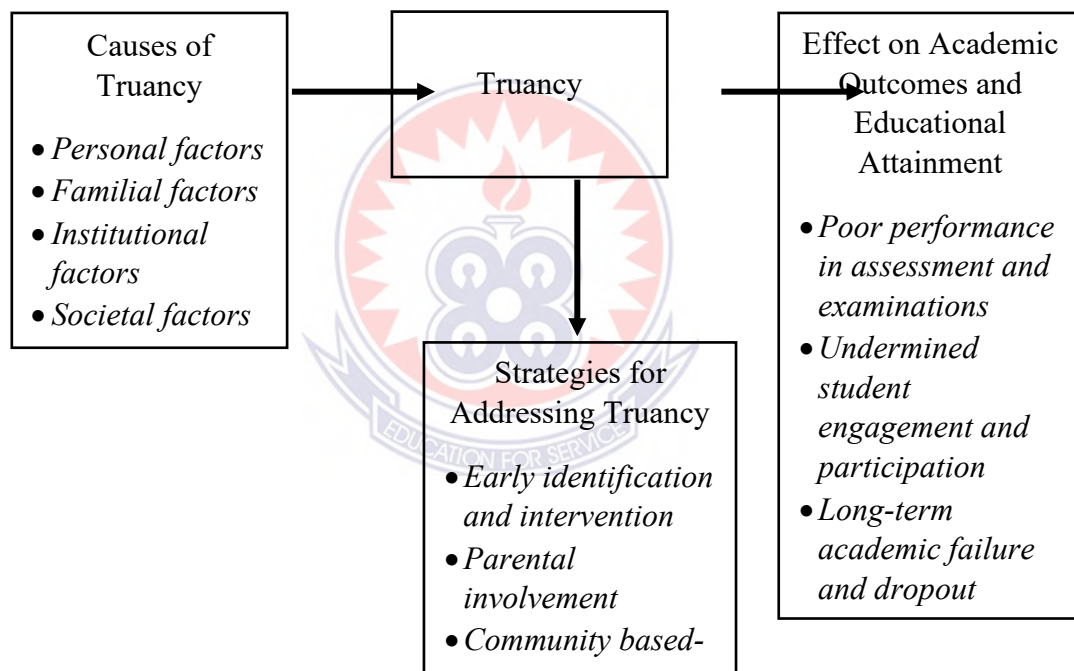
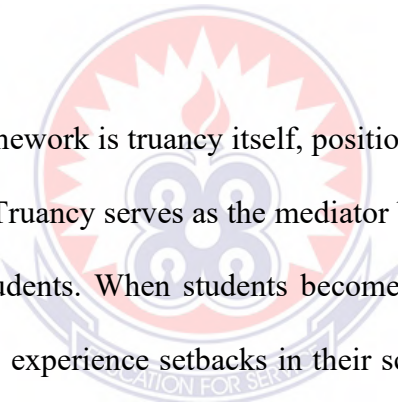


Figure 1 Conceptual framework (Author's own construct)

The conceptual framework illustrates the relationship between the causes of truancy, its direct influence on students' schooling experience, and the resulting effects on academic outcomes and educational attainment, while also highlighting possible strategies for addressing the issue. It provides a systematic structure for understanding how truancy emerges, how it impacts learners, and the mechanisms through which it can be minimised within the context of the Techiman Islamic Junior High School.

The framework begins with the causes of truancy, which are categorised into four dimensions: personal, familial, institutional, and societal factors. *Personal factors* include lack of interest in school, peer influence, or negative attitudes toward learning. *Familial factors* capture the influence of parents or guardians, such as poverty, neglect, or assigning household chores that interfere with schooling. *Institutional factors* reflect issues within the school environment, such as harsh disciplinary practices, uninspiring teaching methods, or inadequate facilities. Finally, *societal factors* refer to broader community and cultural issues, including norms that undervalue formal education or economic conditions that encourage child labour. These interconnected causes feed into the central problem of truancy, which represents absenteeism without legitimate reasons.



At the centre of the framework is truancy itself, positioned as the focal point that links causes with outcomes. Truancy serves as the mediator between underlying factors and its consequences on students. When students become truant due to these combined pressures, they begin to experience setbacks in their schooling that directly influence both their academic and social development.

The effects of truancy are represented on the right-hand side of the framework, categorized under “Academic Outcomes and Educational Attainment.” These include *poor performance in assessments and examinations, undermined student engagement and participation, and long-term academic failure and dropout*. Poor academic performance results from missed instructional hours, lack of continuity in lessons, and unpreparedness for examinations. Undermined engagement refers to the diminished classroom participation, weakened teacher-student relationships, and loss of motivation often reported by truant students. Over time, these challenges can culminate in long-

term failure or complete withdrawal from school, limiting students' educational attainment and future opportunities.

Finally, the framework identifies strategies for addressing truancy, which are presented beneath the central construct. These strategies include *early identification and intervention*, *parental involvement*, and *community-based initiatives*. Early identification emphasises the need to detect truant behaviour promptly and provide timely support before absenteeism escalates into chronic patterns. Parental involvement highlights the importance of close supervision, encouragement, and support from families to keep children engaged in school. Community-based interventions stress the role of collective responsibility, where schools, local leaders, NGOs, and other stakeholders collaborate to raise awareness, provide resources, and establish mechanisms that discourage absenteeism.

The conceptual framework illustrates that truancy is the product of multiple interrelated factors, which in turn negatively affect students' academic outcomes and long-term educational trajectories. However, by implementing targeted strategies that involve families, schools, and communities, the cycle of truancy can be disrupted, thereby enhancing students' attendance and academic success. This framework thus serves as both an analytical tool for understanding the phenomenon and a practical guide for developing interventions.

2.9 Summary

The literature reviewed revealed that truancy is a complex and multi-dimensional issue affecting students' educational outcomes. The concept of truancy, as defined in the study, goes beyond mere absenteeism to include intentional and habitual school

avoidance without valid reasons. The Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory and Hirschi's Social Control Theory provided a foundation for understanding how different layers of environmental and social relationships, ranging from family, peers, and school to societal norms, interact to influence student behaviour, including absenteeism. This theoretical grounding was instrumental in shaping the study's conceptual framework, which organises the causes, effects, and possible strategies to address truancy in a holistic manner.

From the empirical literature, the causes of truancy were consistently linked to factors such as poverty, lack of parental supervision, negative peer influence, poor school infrastructure, and unengaging classroom environments. These factors were not only prevalent in international studies, but also prominently featured in research conducted in Ghana, underscoring the relevance of local context in addressing truancy. The effects of truancy were also thoroughly examined, with several studies affirming its strong association with poor academic performance, low class participation, higher dropout rates, and diminished future prospects. These insights reinforce the urgency of addressing truancy as not just a behavioural issue but as a critical academic and developmental concern.

Lastly, the literature presented several strategies for mitigating truancy, most of which emphasised community involvement, early detection, counselling, and school-based interventions. Effective anti-truancy interventions are those that combine the efforts of parents, teachers, headteachers, and local stakeholders to provide a supportive and engaging school environment. The review also highlighted the importance of tailoring strategies to the specific needs and challenges of the school community. Therefore, this study at the Techiman Islamic Junior High School is grounded in a well-established

body of literature that not only contextualises the phenomenon of truancy but also provides direction for practical, evidence-based solutions to enhance school attendance and improve student outcomes.



CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the methodology employed for the study. It outlines the research philosophy, approach and design, population, sample and sampling techniques, data collection instruments, data collection procedures, and data analysis procedures. The chapter also discusses the validity and reliability of the instruments as well as the ethical considerations observed during the study. Each section is structured to ensure that the methodology aligns with the research objectives and questions, providing a systematic and reliable framework for collecting and analysing data relevant to understanding and addressing truancy in the selected school context.

3.1 Research Philosophy

The research philosophy underpinning this study is pragmatism, which is well-suited for investigations that adopt a mixed-methods approach. Pragmatism focuses on the practical application of research and emphasises the use of multiple methods to understand complex social issues such as truancy (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). This philosophical stance allows the researcher to draw on both qualitative and quantitative data to explore the phenomenon from various angles. By embracing both objective measurements and subjective insights, pragmatism facilitates a comprehensive understanding of the causes, effects, and potential interventions related to truancy at Techiman Islamic JHS.

Pragmatism acknowledges that no single viewpoint can provide a complete picture of a social issue. Instead, it encourages the use of diverse strategies and tools to address

research questions effectively. In the context of this study, qualitative methods such as interviews and focus group discussions capture the lived experiences and perceptions of students and teachers, while quantitative tools like structured questionnaires help measure the extent and frequency of truancy behaviours. This flexibility in data collection and analysis is a hallmark of the pragmatic paradigm, making it highly appropriate for educational research involving multiple stakeholders (Shannon-Baker, 2016).

Ultimately, pragmatism provides a balanced and outcome-oriented foundation for the research, aligning with the study's goal of identifying actionable strategies to reduce truancy.

3.2 Research Approach

This study adopts a mixed methods research approach, which integrates both qualitative and quantitative methodologies to gain a deeper and more holistic understanding of truancy at Techiman Islamic JHS. The mixed methods approach is particularly valuable when exploring complex social issues, such as student truancy, as it enables the researcher to explore not only the statistical patterns of truancy but also the underlying reasons, motivations, and perceptions behind such behaviours (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018). By combining numerical data with rich narrative accounts, this approach helps provide a fuller and more nuanced picture of the phenomenon under investigation.

The quantitative component of the study uses structured questionnaires to gather data from a broader sample of students and teachers to identify the prevalence, frequency, and patterns of truancy. This allows for generalisation and statistical analysis. Meanwhile, the qualitative aspect involves interviews and focus group discussions with selected students, teachers, and headteachers to explore their personal experiences and

interpretations of the causes and effects of truancy. According to Dawadi, Shrestha and Giri (2021), the strength of mixed methods lies in its ability to bridge the gap between numerical trends and contextual depth, thereby enhancing the validity of findings.

Overall, the use of a mixed methods approach ensures that the research not only measures truancy but also interprets it within its real-life school and community context.

3.3 Research Design

This study adopted a convergent parallel mixed methods design to investigate the phenomenon of truancy at Techiman Islamic Junior High School. In this design, both qualitative and quantitative data are collected simultaneously, analysed separately, and then merged to compare and interpret the results (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). The purpose of employing this design is to validate and enrich the findings by integrating numerical data on truancy with the lived experiences and perceptions of students, teachers, and headteachers. This approach is especially suitable for educational research, where both statistical trends and contextual understanding are essential to provide a comprehensive view of the problem (Plano Clark & Ivankova, 2016).

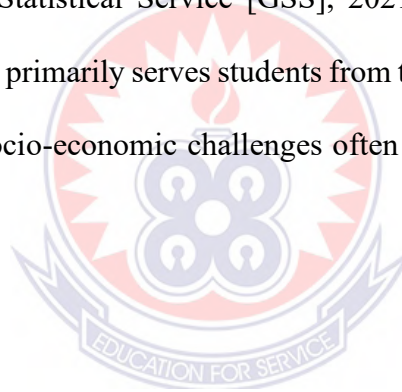
The quantitative component involves the administration of structured questionnaires to a representative sample of students to gather data on the frequency, causes, and patterns of truancy. Concurrently, the qualitative component uses semi-structured interviews and focus group discussions to explore stakeholders' personal experiences, beliefs, and attitudes toward truancy and school attendance.

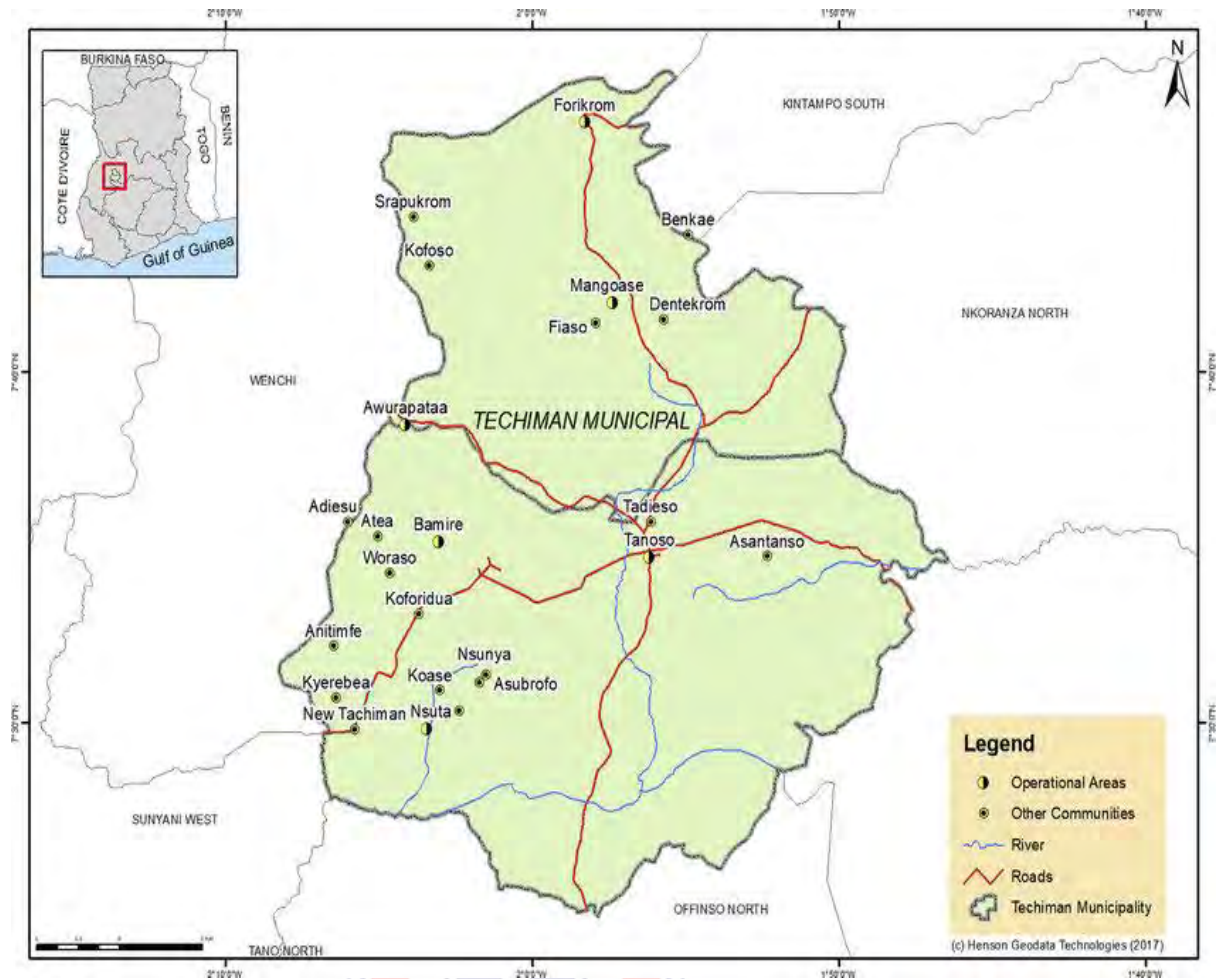
The convergent design enables the study to draw strengths from both methodologies while compensating for their individual limitations. According to Fetters, Curry, and

Creswell (2018), this design allows researchers to corroborate results, provide a broader understanding of the issue, and ensure that conclusions are more robust and applicable to real-world school settings.

3.4 Study Area

The study was conducted at Techiman Islamic Junior High School, located in the Techiman Municipality in the Bono East Region of Ghana. Techiman is a rapidly growing urban centre known for its vibrant commercial activity and cultural diversity, serving as a major trading hub in central Ghana. The municipality has a mix of urban and peri-urban communities, with varying levels of access to education, healthcare, and infrastructure (Ghana Statistical Service [GSS], 2021). Techiman Islamic JHS is a public basic school that primarily serves students from the Zongo and other low-income communities, where socio-economic challenges often influence students' educational experiences.





Source: Techiman Municipal Assembly (2024)

The choice of Techiman Islamic JHS as the study site was informed by preliminary reports and teacher accounts indicating persistent cases of student absenteeism and irregular attendance. Given its demographic composition, the school presents a suitable context for examining the socio-cultural and economic factors that contribute to truancy. Additionally, its location within an urban setting offers an opportunity to explore how issues such as peer pressure, household responsibilities, and parental engagement influence students' commitment to schooling (Ananga, 2011). Understanding the dynamics within this specific school can provide insights into broader trends of truancy in similar educational environments across Ghana.

3.5 Population

The population of this study comprises all students, teachers, and headteachers of Techiman Islamic Junior High School. This population was chosen because these stakeholders are directly involved in the teaching and learning process and are therefore most affected by, or most knowledgeable about, the issue of truancy. The students, being the primary subjects of truancy, provide firsthand insight into their reasons for absenteeism, their personal experiences, and their perceptions of school attendance. Teachers and headteachers, on the other hand, offer professional and institutional perspectives, including how truancy is tracked, managed, and addressed within the school context.

The student population was approximately 128 pupils enrolled in JHS 1 to JHS 3, with an almost equal distribution of males and females. The teacher population comprised 8 and ten (10) male and female teachers respectively, and one (1) male headteacher. The breakdown is as shown in Table 1.

Table 1 Student and Teacher Population at Techiman Islamic JHS

Population	Sex	F	%
Students	Male	57	44.5%
	Female	71	55.5%
	Total	128	100%
Teachers/Headteachers	Male	9	47.4%
	Female	10	52.6%
	Total	19	100%

These students come from diverse socio-economic backgrounds, including low-income households, single-parent families, and informal urban settlements, conditions often associated with higher incidences of truancy (Ananga, 2011). Additionally, many of

these students live in communities where economic activities, religious practices, and family responsibilities can interfere with regular school attendance (Baiden et al., 2020).

The teachers include both subject specialists and class teachers who interact with students on a daily basis. Their experiences and observations make them valuable contributors to understanding how truancy manifests and how it impacts academic performance and classroom management. Headteachers play a supervisory role and are responsible for enforcing attendance policies. They provide insights into institutional records, interventions implemented to reduce truancy, and challenges encountered in monitoring student attendance.

This diverse population allows the study to gather multiple perspectives, which is a strength in mixed methods research. Creswell and Plano Clark (2018) emphasise that defining and understanding the population in a study is critical to determining the scope, relevance, and credibility of findings. By including students, teachers, and headteachers, the research not only investigates the root causes of truancy but also evaluates how it is perceived and addressed from various stakeholder viewpoints. This comprehensive approach enhances the reliability and applicability of the study's conclusions within and beyond the context of Techiman Islamic JHS.

3.6 Sample and Sampling Techniques

A sample was drawn from the total population of students, teachers, and the headteachers at the Techiman Islamic JHS. Given the mixed methods research design, a combination of probability and non-probability sampling techniques was employed to ensure both representation and depth of insight. Specifically, the stratified random sampling was used for the quantitative phase involving students, while the purposive

sampling technique was applied in the qualitative phase involving teachers and headteachers. This approach aligns with recommendations by Creswell and Plano Clark (2018), who argue that mixed methods research benefits from using multiple sampling strategies to balance breadth and depth of data collection.

The sample size for the student population was determined using the Krejcie and Morgan (1970) sample determination table, which provides a scientifically established method for calculating sample sizes. Based on the total student population of approximately 130 students, a sample of 97 students was deemed appropriate for statistical analysis. This sample size was established because on the Krejcie and Morgan (1970) sample determination table, a known population of 130 which is nearly the same population gathered by the researcher was sampled to 97. This sample size ensures that findings can be generalised to the broader student body while allowing for meaningful subgroup analyses across different grade levels thus JHS 1 with a total population of 25, 15 being females and 10 being males, JHS 2 with a population of 35, 18 being females and 17 males and JHS 3 also with a total population of 37, 19 being females and 18 males. Random sampling was employed to ensure that each grade level was well represented. Students were randomly selected within each stratum to reduce selection bias and enhance the generalizability of the findings. This approach accounts for variations in student age, gender, and class attendance patterns, all of which are relevant factors in understanding truancy (Etikan & Bala, 2017).

For the qualitative component, purposive sampling was used to select 10 teachers and the headteacher. These participants were deliberately chosen due to their experience with and knowledge of student attendance issues. Purposive sampling is particularly suitable for qualitative inquiry, as it allows for the selection of information-rich cases

that provide deep insights into the contextual and administrative factors influencing truancy (Palinkas et al., 2015). The teachers selected were actively involved in attendance monitoring and had significant experience working with students prone to absenteeism.

This dual sampling approach provides a comprehensive dataset: the stratified random sample delivers measurable data that reflects broader trends in truancy, while the purposive sample offers a deeper understanding of the factors influencing truancy at a school and administrative level. The integration of both strategies ensures the study's validity and relevance in addressing truancy at Techiman Islamic JHS, facilitating both generalizability and contextual insight into the phenomenon.

3.7 Instruments for Data Collection

In line with the mixed methods research design adopted for this study, multiple data collection instruments were employed to gather both quantitative and qualitative data regarding the phenomenon of truancy at Techiman Islamic Junior High School. The key instruments included structured questionnaires, semi-structured interview guides, and focus group discussion (FGD) guides. The rationale for using a combination of instruments is to ensure triangulation, which enhances the validity and depth of the research findings (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018).

The structured questionnaire was developed to collect quantitative data from students. It was divided into sections that covered demographic information, frequency of absenteeism, causes of truancy, and its perceived effects on academic performance. The items in the questionnaire were closed-ended and designed using a Likert scale, dichotomous (yes/no), and multiple-choice formats to ensure ease of analysis and reliability. The questionnaire was pilot-tested among a small group of students from a

neighbouring junior high school to ensure clarity, consistency, and reliability. According to Bryman (2016), well-constructed questionnaires provide a cost-effective and efficient means of gathering large volumes of standardised data, which is particularly useful for identifying patterns and correlations in student behaviour.

The semi-structured interview guide was used to gather qualitative data from teachers and school administrators. This instrument enabled the researcher to explore deeper insights into the causes, effects, and school-based strategies for addressing truancy. The guide was designed with open-ended questions that allowed participants to share their experiences, opinions, and suggestions in a flexible and conversational manner. As noted by Tisdell, Merriam and Stuckey-Peyrot (2025), semi-structured interviews are valuable for eliciting rich, detailed data while allowing interviewers to probe for clarity and elaboration. Interviews were conducted in person and audio-recorded (with consent) to ensure accuracy and completeness of the data.

Additionally, focus group discussion (FGD) guides were used to facilitate discussions with selected groups of students. The FGD sessions aimed to complement the survey findings by offering students a more relaxed environment to discuss their experiences and perspectives on truancy. FGDs are known for their ability to generate interaction and reveal collective views or social norms that might not emerge in individual interviews (Gilbert & Stoneman, 2015). Each FGD comprised 6-8 students selected based on their attendance records to include both regular and irregular attendees.

To ensure the validity and reliability of these instruments, content validation was performed by educational experts and school counsellors who reviewed the instruments for relevance and appropriateness. Revisions were made based on their feedback. Cronbach's alpha was used to test the internal consistency of the questionnaire, with

acceptable thresholds set at 0.7 and above, as recommended by Tavakol and Dennick (2011). Moreover, ethical considerations such as informed consent, confidentiality, and the voluntary nature of participation were strictly adhered to during the data collection process.

By employing multiple instruments tailored to the characteristics of each respondent group, the study was able to comprehensively examine the issue of truancy from both quantitative and qualitative angles. This multi-instrument approach ensures that the data collected are robust, contextually grounded, and capable of supporting actionable conclusions.

3.8 Validity and Reliability of Instruments

Ensuring the validity and reliability of research instruments is crucial in establishing the credibility and trustworthiness of any study. In the context of this investigation into truancy at Techiman Islamic Junior High School, the researcher employed both qualitative and quantitative tools such as structured questionnaires, interviews, and focus group discussions. These instruments were carefully validated and tested for reliability to ensure they accurately measured what they were intended to, and could yield consistent results across time and respondents.

Validity refers to the extent to which an instrument measures what it is supposed to measure (Heale & Twycross, 2018). To establish content validity, the researcher engaged subject matter experts (including research supervisor) in education and research methodology to review the items in the questionnaire and interview guides. These experts assessed the relevance, clarity, and alignment of the items with the study's objectives. Their feedback led to modifications that enhanced the quality and appropriateness of the instruments. Additionally, a pilot study was conducted in a

nearby junior high school with similar characteristics to Techiman Islamic JHS. This helped to identify ambiguous or irrelevant items, which were then revised accordingly.

Construct validity was also taken into account to ensure the instrument reflected the theoretical constructs underpinning truancy, such as socio-economic factors, school environment, and individual student behaviours. The research drew upon established frameworks from recent literature to structure the questions logically and theoretically (Creswell & Creswell, 2018).

Reliability, on the other hand, refers to the consistency and dependability of an instrument (Mohajan, 2018). To establish internal consistency reliability for the quantitative questionnaire, the Cronbach's alpha coefficient was computed during the pilot study. A Cronbach's alpha value of 0.70 or higher is generally considered acceptable (Taber, 2018). The pilot results yielded an alpha of 0.76, indicating that the items within the questionnaire were reliably measuring the same underlying construct. For qualitative instruments like interviews and focus group discussions, reliability was addressed through clear, consistent interview protocols and training for data collectors. Audio recordings and transcriptions were double-checked to ensure accuracy and reduce researcher bias.

Hence, the researcher ensured that the instruments were both valid and reliable through expert reviews, piloting, alignment with literature, and statistical checks. These measures helped enhance the credibility of the findings and ensured that the data collected accurately represented the phenomenon of truancy in the selected school.

3.9 Trustworthiness

In qualitative research, ensuring trustworthiness is critical to guarantee that findings are credible, dependable, confirmable, and transferable. This study employed multiple strategies to enhance trustworthiness. According to Lincoln and Guba (1985, as cited in Nowell et al., 2017), trustworthiness is achieved through four key criteria: credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability. These principles were carefully applied throughout the study to ensure rigour and reliability in both data collection and analysis.

Credibility refers to the confidence in the accuracy and truth of the findings. To achieve credibility, the study employed triangulation by using diverse data sources including student questionnaires, teacher and headteacher interviews, and student focus group discussions. This method allowed for cross-verification of information and reduced potential bias (Moon et al., 2019). Member checking was also used, where participants were given opportunities to clarify and confirm their responses during discussions and interviews, ensuring that their views were accurately represented.

Transferability concerns the applicability of findings to other contexts. To enhance transferability, the study provided rich, detailed descriptions of the study area, participants, and research process, enabling readers to determine whether the findings are relevant to similar schools or communities (Korstjens & Moser, 2018). By situating the study within the socio-economic and educational context of Techiman, the study allows future researchers and practitioners to judge the potential applicability of the results to other Ghanaian junior high schools.

Dependability involves the consistency of findings over time and across conditions. This was addressed by maintaining a clear audit trail that documented all stages of the

research process, including data collection methods, coding strategies, and analysis procedures. According to Nowell et al. (2017), keeping detailed records allows other researchers to replicate the study or follow the decision-making process.

Confirmability ensures that findings are shaped by participants' perspectives rather than researcher bias. In this study, confirmability was enhanced through reflexivity, as the researcher maintained awareness of personal assumptions and minimised their influence on data interpretation. Audit trails and triangulation further supported objectivity (Moon et al., 2019).

This study ensured a high level of trustworthiness by addressing credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability, thereby strengthening the validity and reliability of its conclusions of the study.

3.10 Data Collection Procedures

In conducting the study, a systematic and multi-pronged data collection approach was adopted, consistent with the mixed-methods research design. This approach facilitated the collection of both quantitative and qualitative data to ensure a holistic understanding of the issue. The procedures followed in collecting data were guided by ethical principles, logistical planning, and the need for relevance and accuracy.

The first step in the data collection process involved obtaining ethical clearance and formal permission from relevant authorities. A letter of introduction was secured from the university or research institution, which was then presented to the Municipal Education Directorate and the headteacher of Techiman Islamic Junior High School. This was essential in establishing credibility and gaining access to the school and its

stakeholders. Informed consent was also sought from all participants, with assurances of confidentiality, voluntary participation, and the right to withdraw at any point.

The quantitative data was collected through the administration of structured questionnaires to a sample of students. The questionnaires were distributed during regular school hours to ensure maximum participation. Participants were guided through the process to ensure they understood the questions, especially for those with limited literacy. The researcher and two trained research assistants were present to clarify questions where necessary and to prevent response bias or peer influence. Completed questionnaires were immediately collected to avoid loss or tampering.

Simultaneously, qualitative data were collected using semi-structured interviews and focus group discussions. Interviews were conducted with selected teachers and the headteacher to gain insights into their perceptions and experiences concerning truancy. An interview guide was used to ensure consistency across all sessions while allowing flexibility for probing and clarifying responses. Each interview lasted between 30 to 45 minutes and was held in a quiet environment within the school premises to ensure privacy and comfort.

Focus group discussions were conducted with selected students to explore their perspectives on truancy, including causes, effects, and possible solutions. Five groups consisted of 6-8 students per group, grouped by class levels to encourage open communication among peers. Discussions were moderated by the researcher, with a note-taker and audio recorder used (with participants' consent) to ensure accurate capture of responses. These sessions lasted about 45 minutes and were held in an informal but controlled setting within the school.

To ensure data quality, multiple strategies were employed. The use of triangulation, i.e., collecting data from different sources and using various instruments helped validate the findings. Field notes were taken during interviews and discussions to record non-verbal cues and contextual details that might enrich interpretation. All audio recordings were transcribed verbatim, and the transcripts were reviewed for accuracy before analysis.

Upon completion of data collection, the instruments and data were safely stored and coded to protect participant identities. The process adhered strictly to ethical standards and maintained academic rigor, ensuring that the information collected was trustworthy, relevant, and directly addressed the research objectives of the study. This careful and methodical approach allowed for comprehensive and credible data to inform the investigation into truancy at Techiman Islamic Junior High School.

3.11 Data Analysis Techniques

The data analysis techniques employed in the study were carefully selected to align with the mixed-methods approach adopted for the research. Given that the study collected both quantitative and qualitative data, distinct yet complementary techniques were used to analyse each data set, enabling a thorough exploration and understanding of the phenomenon under investigation.

For the quantitative data, which primarily came from structured questionnaires administered to students, statistical analysis was conducted using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) version 23. Before actual analysis, data were cleaned and coded to ensure accuracy and consistency. Descriptive statistics such as frequencies, percentages, means, and standard deviations were computed to summarise demographic characteristics of respondents and responses to key variables related to

truancy. These measures provided a clear overview of patterns and trends regarding the prevalence, causes, and effects of truancy among students.

To explore relationships among variables, inferential statistics such as chi-square tests and cross-tabulations were employed where appropriate. For instance, chi-square tests were used to determine whether there was a significant relationship between gender and frequency of truancy or between parental supervision and students' attendance behaviour. These tests helped validate findings beyond descriptive observations and allowed the researcher to draw conclusions with statistical backing.

The qualitative data, derived from interviews with teachers and the headteacher as well as focus group discussions with students, were analysed thematically. This process began with transcription of all audio recordings into textual data. The transcripts were then carefully read multiple times to gain familiarity with the content. Using Braun and Clarke's (2006) six-phase framework for thematic analysis, data were coded manually and then grouped into themes based on patterns and recurring ideas that emerged across responses. Key themes included perceived causes of truancy (e.g., peer influence, home responsibilities, and teacher-student relationships), consequences (e.g., academic decline, discipline issues), and suggested strategies for reducing truancy.

The integration of both quantitative and qualitative results was done during the interpretation phase. This process, referred to as triangulation, allowed the researcher to cross-validate findings and gain deeper insights into the research problem. For example, while questionnaire responses might reveal that lack of parental involvement is a major cause of truancy, interviews and discussions could elaborate on how specific parenting behaviours contribute to absenteeism. This methodological synergy enriched the analysis and increased the validity of the conclusions drawn.

Thus, the data analysis techniques used in this study were appropriate, systematic, and aligned with the research design. They enabled a robust examination of truancy at Techiman Islamic Junior High School, ensuring that the results were credible, insightful, and capable of informing policy and intervention strategies.

3.12 Ethical Considerations

In conducting the study, ethical considerations were of paramount importance to ensure the rights, dignity, and well-being of all participants were safeguarded throughout the research process. Given that the study involved human subjects, including minors (students), adherence to ethical standards was critical to maintaining integrity and academic responsibility.

The first ethical step taken was obtaining ethical clearance from the researcher's academic institution, University of Education, Winneba. This approval ensured that the study met the required ethical guidelines and that its objectives and procedures were ethically sound. Following this, permission was sought from the Techiman Municipal Education Directorate and the headteacher of Techiman Islamic JHS to gain access to the school and its stakeholders. All participants were informed about the purpose of the research, their role in it, and the voluntary nature of participation. Informed consent was obtained from teachers and headteachers, and assent was sought from students, with prior consent from parents or guardians. Participants were also assured of their right to withdraw at any stage without facing any negative consequences.

Confidentiality was strictly upheld. Participants' names and identities were not recorded in any published findings, and data were stored securely. The study also avoided any form of coercion or harm, ensuring a respectful and supportive

environment for all involved. This ethical diligence enhanced the credibility and integrity of the research.

3.13 Chapter Summary

This chapter presented a comprehensive outline of the research methodology employed in the study. The chapter began with an overview of the research philosophy, which highlighted the pragmatic worldview adopted for the study. This philosophy guided the researcher's decision to employ a mixed-methods approach, integrating both quantitative and qualitative methods to capture the complexity of truancy and its related factors within the school context.

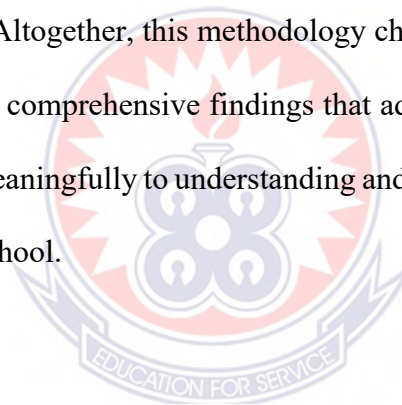
The research approach section elaborated on the rationale for combining quantitative and qualitative methods, emphasising the complementary strengths of both in providing depth and breadth to the investigation. The research design adopted was a convergent parallel mixed-methods design, which allowed for the simultaneous collection and analysis of both data types, with findings integrated during interpretation. The study area, Techiman Islamic Junior High School, was described in terms of its geographic, demographic, and educational relevance to the study's objectives.

The chapter further detailed the target population, comprising students, teachers, and the headteacher of the school. The sampling technique involved a combination of stratified and purposive sampling, ensuring diverse and representative participation. Instruments for data collection included structured questionnaires for students, semi-structured interviews for teachers and the headteacher, and focus group discussions, particularly with students, to gather in-depth qualitative insights. The validity and

reliability of these instruments were established through pilot testing, expert reviews, and consistency checks.

Data collection procedures were carefully planned and executed, observing ethical guidelines and securing permissions from educational authorities and consent from participants. The data analysis section explained the application of SPSS for analysing quantitative data and thematic analysis for interpreting qualitative responses. Triangulation ensured that findings were cross-validated for enhanced credibility.

Finally, the chapter outlined the ethical considerations taken into account, such as informed consent, confidentiality, voluntary participation, and protection of minors involved in the study. Altogether, this methodology chapter laid a solid foundation for generating reliable and comprehensive findings that address the core objectives of the study and contribute meaningfully to understanding and mitigating truancy at Techiman Islamic Junior High School.



CHAPTER FOUR

PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS OF DATA

This chapter presents and analyses the data collected from the students, teachers, and headteachers, regarding the phenomenon of truancy at the Techiman Islamic Junior High School. It provides a detailed account of the demographic characteristics of respondents, followed by findings organised in line with the study's research objectives. The chapter uses descriptive statistics such as frequencies, percentages, means, and standard deviations, along with qualitative insights from interviews and focus group discussions, to highlight the causes, effects, and possible solutions to truancy.

4.1 Demographic Data of Respondents

This section presents the demographic characteristics of the student respondents, including their class/form, age, gender, and living arrangements, to provide context for understanding their perspectives on truancy.

Table 2 presents the distribution of student respondents according to their classes at the Techiman Islamic Junior High School. The total number of students surveyed was 97, and they were categorised into three academic levels: JHS 1, JHS 2, and JHS 3.

Table 2 Distribution of Respondents by Class

Class/Form	Frequency	Percentage
JHS 1	24	24.7
JHS 2	35	36.1
JHS 3	38	39.2
Total	97	100.0

Source: Field data (2024)

The data shows that the highest proportion of respondents came from JHS 3, with 38 students, representing 39.2% of the total sample. JHS 2 students constituted the second-largest group, with 35 respondents, accounting for 36.1% of the total, whilst JHS 1 had the lowest representation, with 24 students, making up 24.7% of the respondents.

Table 3 illustrates the age distribution of the 97 student respondents involved in the study. The ages of the students are grouped into three categories: 10-12 years, 13-15 years, and above 15 years.

Table 3 Age Distribution of Student Respondents

Age (in years)	Frequency	Percentage
10-12	28	28.9
13-15	57	58.8
Above 15	12	12.4
Total	97	100.0

Source: Field data (2024)

The majority of the respondents, 57 students, representing 58.8%, fall within the 13-15 years age group. This is consistent with the typical age range for junior high school students in Ghana and suggests that most of the students surveyed are in the core

adolescent years. Students aged 10-12 years make up the second-largest group, accounting for 28 students or 28.9% of the sample. These students are generally in their early adolescence, likely corresponding to those in JHS 1 or early JHS 2, who may still be adjusting to the increased responsibilities and expectations of junior high school life. Only 12 students, representing 12.4%, were aged above 15 years, which may include students who have repeated a class or started school late.

Table 4 displays the gender distribution of the 97 student respondents who participated in the study on truancy at Techiman Islamic Junior High School.

Table 4 Gender Distribution of Student Respondents

Gender	Frequency	Percentage
Male	45	46.4
Female	52	53.6
Total	97	100.0

Source: Field data (2024)

The data reveals a relatively balanced representation of both genders, with 52 female students, making up 53.6% of the total sample, and 45 male students, accounting for 46.4%.

Table 5 presents the living arrangements of the 97 student respondents in the study.

Table 5 Living Arrangements of Student Respondents

Person	Frequency	Percent
Both parents	72	74.2
Single parent	14	14.4
Guardian	11	11.3
Total	97	100.0

Source: Field data (2024)

The data shows that the majority of students, 72 out of 97, representing 74.2%, live with both parents. This suggests that most students come from two-parent households, which indicate a relatively stable family structure that can contribute positively to school attendance, depending on the level of parental involvement and supervision. A smaller proportion, 14 students (14.4%), live with a single parent. Students in single-parent homes face more responsibilities at home or experience less consistent supervision due to the parent's work commitments, which could potentially increase the risk of truancy. Additionally, 11 students (11.3%) reported living with a guardian. This group include students orphaned or separated from their biological parents due to economic, social, or health-related reasons.

Table 6 shows the occupational distribution of the parents or guardians of the 97 student respondents.

Table 6 Occupation of Parent/Guardian of Student Respondents

Occupation	Frequency	Percent
Farming	52	53.6
Trading	18	18.6
Teaching	12	12.4
Unemployed	5	5.2
Other	10	10.3
Total	97	100.0

Source: Field data (2024)

The majority, 52 parents or guardians, representing 53.6%, are engaged in farming. This high percentage suggests that a large proportion of students come from agricultural households, which is consistent with the rural-urban character of Techiman Municipality. The second most common occupation is trading, with 18 respondents (18.6%) reporting that their parent or guardian is involved in small-scale commerce. Trading often demands flexible hours and family involvement, including children assisting in market activities. Teaching, which represents 12 respondents (12.4%), reflects a small but significant group of students whose parents work in the education sector. Only 5 parents or guardians (5.2%) were reported as unemployed, which could suggest economic vulnerability. The “Other” category, accounting for 10 respondents (10.3%), includes parents working as civil servants, artisans, or self-employed workers.

4.2 Analysis of Data Based on Research Questions

This section presents the analysis of data based on the research questions, providing insights into the causes, effects, and suggested strategies for addressing truancy among students at Techiman Islamic Junior High School.

Research Questions One

This subsection addresses Research Question One: *What are major causes of truancy among students at the Techiman Islamic Junior High School?* It analysed the causes of truancy among students at Techiman Islamic Junior High School using both quantitative and qualitative data.

Table 7 presents students' responses to various statements regarding the causes of truancy. The responses were measured on a four-point Likert scale ranging from *Strongly Agree* to *Strongly Disagree*, with corresponding mean values and standard deviations to determine the strength and consistency of the responses.

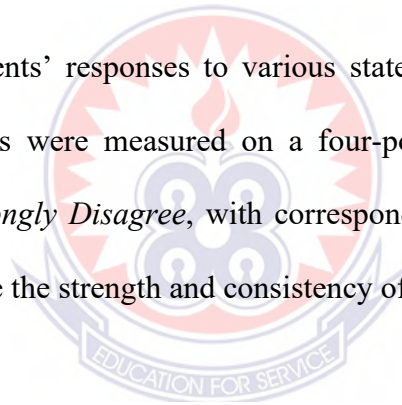


Table 7 Students' Perceptions of the Causes of Truancy

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Total	Mean	Std. Deviation
I avoid school because some teachers are too harsh	7 7.2%	31 32.0%	43 44.3%	16 16.5%	97 100.0%	2.70	0.831
I am influenced by my friends who also skip school	18 18.6%	22 22.7%	31 32.0%	26 26.8%	97 100.0%	2.67	1.068
My parents sometimes ask me to miss school to help at home	27 27.8%	54 55.7%	6 6.2%	10 10.3%	97 100.0%	1.99	0.872
I skip school because I find lessons boring	46 47.4%	23 23.7%	18 18.6%	10 10.3%	97 100.0%	1.92	1.038
I do not attend school regularly because I have no transport fare	33 34.0%	48 49.5%	11 11.3%	5 5.2%	97 100.0%	1.88	0.807

Source: Field data (2024)

The highest level of agreement was recorded for the item: “I do not attend school regularly because I have no transport fare”, with a mean of 1.88 and 83.5% of respondents either strongly agreeing (34.0%) or agreeing (49.5%). This indicates that financial constraints, particularly transport-related costs, are a major driver of truancy. The low standard deviation of 0.807 also suggests a high level of consensus among students on this issue. Another significant cause identified was “I skip school because I find lessons boring”, with 47.4% strongly agreeing and 23.7% agreeing, resulting in a mean score of 1.92. This highlights a lack of student engagement and motivation, due to uninteresting instructional methods or irrelevant curriculum content. The relatively

high standard deviation (1.038) suggests some variation in perception, but the majority found this reason valid. Also, parental influence was also notable: 83.5% of students (mean = 1.99) agreed or strongly agreed with the statement “My parents sometimes ask me to miss school to help at home.” This underscores the role of household responsibilities, especially in farming or trading families, where children are often expected to contribute to the household’s economic survival.

In contrast, peer influence and harsh teacher behaviour were perceived as less significant causes of truancy. For the statement “I am influenced by friends who also skip school,” only 41.3% agreed or strongly agreed (mean = 2.67), while 58.8% disagreed or strongly disagreed, indicating mixed views. Similarly, for “I avoid school because some teachers are too harsh,” only 39.2% agreed or strongly agreed (mean = 2.70), with a higher proportion of students disagreeing (44.3%). These higher mean values and standard deviations suggest less consensus and lower impact compared to economic and household-related reasons.

Hence, the results confirm that economic hardship (transport costs), lack of engaging instruction, and parental demands are the most dominant student-perceived causes of truancy. While peer pressure and harsh teaching play roles in specific cases, the findings clearly prioritise socio-economic and instructional factors.

The analysis of interview and focus group responses reveals that the causes of truancy at Techiman Islamic Junior High School are multifaceted, stemming from socio-economic, home-based, school-related, and peer-influenced factors. These findings are drawn from teacher and headteacher interviews as well as student focus group discussions, offering a comprehensive view of the issue from both adult and youth perspectives.

A dominant theme across both interviews and focus groups is that many students are absent from school due to economic hardship. Teachers and headteachers consistently cited poverty, household chores, and child labour as key reasons for truancy. Respondent 1, for instance, noted that students often engage in household trading or farm work. Respondent 3 added that parents sometimes rely on their children for home support, leading to missed school days. These views were reinforced by students, with Group 1 stating that some stay home to work or help their families with selling, and Group 3 highlighting the lack of money for lunch or materials as a barrier to attendance. Moreover, several interviewees, such as Respondents 6 and 9, emphasised that children from large or economically deprived families are more likely to be truant. Similarly, Group 5 of the student focus groups pointed out that when parents do not provide basic needs, students lose motivation to attend school. Another contributing factor identified was the lack of parental supervision and involvement in students' academic life. Respondents 2, 3, and 9 attributed truancy to poor parental control, neglect, and indifference to education. This view was also supported in student responses. For example, Group 2 noted that "some parents do not care if their children attend school or not," while Group 4 explained that students who are not guided or supervised are more likely to stay home.

Also, from both student and teacher perspectives, certain school-related conditions also encourage truancy. Respondents 1 and 3 pointed to uninspiring teaching, overcrowded classrooms, and lack of materials as demotivating factors. Respondent 8 specifically mentioned "inadequate facilities like broken toilets and lack of books." These conditions reduce students' willingness to attend school, especially if their learning environment is uncomfortable or unstimulating. Student voices mirrored these concerns. Group 2 mentioned that "difficult subjects like Math" discourage some

students, while Group 5 noted that “when there are no learning materials, some feel school is a waste of time.” Additionally, harsh treatment by teachers was identified by both students (Group 1 and Group 2) and teachers (Respondent 2) as a factor that causes students to avoid school.

Peer influence also emerged as a significant cause, though to a lesser extent than economic and school-related factors. Respondents 4 and 10 observed that students influenced by friends tend to skip classes. Group 2 from the student focus groups remarked that some peers laugh at others for attending school regularly, creating pressure to conform to non-attendance. Another psychological driver was the lack of interest in school. Several students admitted that boredom or irrelevance of lessons led them to skip school. Respondent 7 explained that “some students feel school is boring or irrelevant,” indicating a need to make learning more engaging and practical.

The analysis shows that the causes of truancy at Techiman Islamic Junior High School are interrelated and deeply rooted in both external (economic, parental) and internal (school environment, personal motivation) contexts. The most significant contributors identified were financial difficulties, domestic labour demands, poor parental involvement, negative school experiences, and peer pressure.

Discussion of Findings on Research Objective One

The findings from interviews, focus group discussions, and quantitative data revealed that truancy at Techiman Islamic Junior High School is primarily driven by a combination of socio-economic challenges, household responsibilities, parental neglect, negative school experiences, and peer influence. These findings closely align with existing literature, reinforcing the understanding that truancy is a multidimensional issue influenced by both internal and external factors.

One of the causes identified was poverty and financial hardship, particularly the inability of families to provide basic school necessities of life such as food, uniforms, and transport fare. This was echoed in the focus group discussions where students reported missing school due to hunger or lack of fare. This aligns with the findings of Agyire-Tettey et al. (2021), who found that economic deprivation significantly influences school attendance in low-income communities in Ghana. Similarly, Adabor (2025) emphasises that poverty remains a core predictor of truancy, as students from disadvantaged households are more likely to prioritise survival activities over formal education. In addition to poverty, domestic labour and household chores were also major contributors to truancy, particularly among students living with single parents or guardians. Teachers reported that students often miss school to assist with farming or trading, especially on market days, a finding consistent with the observations of Yankyerah, Asare, and Ofori (2023), who found that children in rural and peri-urban areas of Ghana are frequently withdrawn from school to help with household economic activities. This underscores the tension between education and survival within low-income families, where children's labour is often essential to household functioning.

Parental neglect and low supervision were also cited as major causes, with teachers and students both indicating that some parents show little concern for their children's school attendance. This is supported by recent findings from Amankwah (2020), who found that poor parental engagement and lack of monitoring significantly increase the likelihood of truancy among junior high school students. Where parents are disengaged, students lack both the encouragement and accountability structures that promote regular school attendance. School-related factors, such as negative teacher-student relationships, uninspiring teaching, and overcrowded or uncomfortable classroom environments, also emerged as contributory factors. Students reported feeling bored in

class or avoiding school due to harsh treatment from teachers. These findings align with the work of Kanyiri (2025), who found that poor pedagogical approaches, lack of student-centered learning, and corporal punishment contribute to absenteeism and disengagement in basic schools. Furthermore, the physical state of the learning environment including lack of adequate materials, desks, or toilets can further reduce students' willingness to attend.

Finally, peer pressure and loss of motivation were also mentioned, though less frequently. Students admitted being influenced by friends to skip school or finding school irrelevant. This resonates with the findings of Ohiri (2019), who noted that peer groups play a critical role in shaping students' behaviour and attitude toward school, particularly during adolescence.

The findings from this study confirm and extend existing literature on the causes of truancy among junior high school students. The multidimensional nature of the problem, rooted in economic hardship, domestic responsibilities, weak parental involvement, school conditions, and peer dynamics requires a comprehensive, multi-stakeholder approach to intervention.

Research Question Two

This subsection presents an analysis of Research Question Two: *How does truancy affect students' academic outcome and educational attainment?* It focused on how truancy affects the academic performance of students at Techiman Islamic Junior High School.

Table 8 presents students' responses to how often they absent themselves from school without permission.

Table 8 Frequency of Truancy Among Student Respondents

How often do you absent yourself from school without permission?	F	%
Never	7	7.2
Rarely (3-5 times per term)	50	51.5
Sometimes (1-2 times per term)	23	23.7
Frequently (More than 5 times per term)	17	17.5
Total	97	100.0

Source: Field data (2024)

From Table 8, it is evident that truancy is a prevalent issue, with the majority of students admitting to some level of unauthorised absence. Fifty (50) students (51.5%) reported that they are rarely truant (3-5 times per term). Also, 23 students (23.7%) indicated they are sometimes truant (1-2 times per term). A concerning 17 students (17.5%) admitted to being frequently truant (more than 5 times per term). Only 7 students (7.2%) reported that they never absent themselves without permission, suggesting that regular school attendance without unauthorised absences is the exception rather than the norm. The data indicates that over 90% of students have engaged in some form of truancy, with varying degrees of frequency.

Table 9 presents the crosstabulation between gender and frequency of truancy shows that truancy patterns are relatively similar between male and female students.

Table 9 Crosstabulation between Gender and Frequency of Truancy

Gender	How often do you absent yourself from school without permission?				Total
	Never	Rarely (1-2 times per term)	Sometimes (3-5 times per term)	Frequently (More than 5 times per term)	
Male	3 6.7%	11 24.4%	23 51.1%	8 17.8%	45 100%
Female	4 7.7%	12 23.1%	27 51.9%	9 17.3%	52 100%
Total	7 7.2%	23 23.7%	50 51.5%	17 17.5%	97 100%

A higher proportion of both male (51.1%) and female (51.9%) students fall under the category of being truant sometimes (3-5 times per term). Additionally, the proportion of males and females who are frequently truant is quite similar (17.8% and 17.3%, respectively). However, females reported a slightly higher tendency to skip school rarely (24.4% of males versus 23.1% of females). The data indicates that truancy is a widespread issue affecting both genders almost equally, though some slight gender differences in the frequency of truancy exist.

Table 10 presents the chi-square tests used to determine whether a significant relationship existed between gender and frequency of truancy.

Table 10 Chi-Square Tests for Association between Gender and Frequency of Truancy

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	.060 ^a	3	.996
Likelihood Ratio	.060	3	.996
Linear-by-Linear Association	.005	1	.945
N of Valid Cases	97		

The Chi-square tests for the association between gender and frequency of truancy show that there is no statistically significant association between the two variables (Pearson Chi-Square = .060, $p = .996$). This means that gender does not appear to be a significant factor in explaining the frequency of truancy at Techiman Islamic Junior High School. Both male and female students are equally likely to skip school, regardless of their gender.

Table 11 presents student responses on how truancy affects their academic performance and classroom experiences. Responses were measured using a four-point Likert scale, and the results include both mean values and standard deviations to assess the level of agreement and consistency in responses.

Table 11 Effects of Truancy on Students' Academic Performance

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Total	Mean	Std. Deviation
My relationship with teachers is affected when I skip classes	9	33	33	22	97	2.7	0.926
	9.3%	34.0%	34.0%	22.7%	100.0%		
Missing school affects my understanding of lessons	17	36	32	12	97	2.4	0.92
	17.5%	37.1%	33.0%	12.4%	100.0%		
I feel left out when I return after being absent	17	40	27	13	97	2.37	0.928
	17.5%	41.2%	27.8%	13.4%	100.0%		
Truancy has caused me to perform poorly in exams	18	43	30	6	97	2.25	0.83
	18.6%	44.3%	30.9%	6.2%	100.0%		

Source: Field data (2024)

The statement “Truancy has caused me to perform poorly in exams” received the highest level of agreement, with 18.6% strongly agreeing and 44.3% agreeing, totalling 62.9% of respondents acknowledging this effect. The mean score of 2.25 (on a scale where 1 = Strongly Agree and 4 = Strongly Disagree) further supports this, indicating a general consensus that truancy has a negative impact on exam performance. This finding confirms that repeated absenteeism reduces lesson comprehension and test preparedness, ultimately lowering academic achievement.

Similarly, the item “I feel left out when I return after being absent” was affirmed by 58.7% of students (mean = 2.37), suggesting that truancy affects students' sense of belonging and classroom participation. Feeling out of place after an absence lead to disengagement, reduced confidence, and reluctance to seek academic support, further compounding the effects of poor attendance. The statement “Missing school affects my understanding of lessons” was also supported by a majority, with 54.6% agreeing or

strongly agreeing and a mean of 2.4. This highlights the direct link between class attendance and academic comprehension. When students miss lessons, they fall behind, making it difficult to follow new topics, especially in cumulative subjects. Interestingly, the statement “My relationship with teachers is affected when I skip classes” had a more divided response, with only 43.3% agreeing or strongly agreeing, and 34% disagreeing. With a mean of 2.7, this item had the highest (least favourable) average score among the four. This suggests that while truancy affect teacher-student rapport for some, many students do not perceive a strong social consequence to their absences. The data shows that students perceive truancy as having substantial negative effects on their academic performance, understanding of lessons, and classroom inclusion.

The interview and focus group discussion data provide evidence that truancy has significant negative impacts on students’ academic performance, classroom engagement, and long-term educational outcomes at Techiman Islamic Junior High School. Teachers, headteachers, and students consistently linked absenteeism with poor academic results, learning challenges, and feelings of isolation, thus fulfilling Research Objective 2.

Across all teacher and headteacher interviews, respondents emphasised that students who frequently skip school struggle academically. Respondent 1 observed that truant students “suffer significantly” in their grades, and Respondent 3 noted they “often perform below average.” These responses highlight that, repeated absences cause students to miss essential lessons, which in turn creates learning gaps that are difficult to recover from. Respondent 10 supported this by explaining that “continuous absence results in serious academic decline,” reinforcing the view that academic performance is directly tied to consistent classroom attendance. Students shared similar experiences.

In the focus group discussions, Group 1 reported struggling to understand new topics after even a single missed day. Group 3 explained that they score low in tests when they have been absent because they do not understand the assignments. Group 2 stated that missing school makes it hard to catch up, especially in difficult subjects like Mathematics and Science. These reflections show how absenteeism disrupts learning continuity and undermines academic confidence.

Another consistent theme was the emotional and social effect of truancy. Teachers reported that truant students often feel disconnected and disengaged from school life. Respondent 4 mentioned that truancy “leads to a drop in confidence and participation,” while Respondent 5 noted that those who return after being absent often “feel left out.” These perspectives were echoed by students in Group 4, who said they feel behind and even consider giving up when they miss school. Group 5 stated that absenteeism makes them feel excluded and overwhelmed when lessons have moved ahead. Group 4 added that missing classes affects how confident they feel in class, contributing to further disengagement. These findings indicate that truancy does not only affect academic outcomes but also impacts students’ classroom participation and psychological well-being.

Additionally, teachers and headteachers warned that if truancy continues unchecked, it can lead to more severe consequences such as school dropout. Respondent 6 stated that some students “become dropouts,” while Respondent 2 pointed out that truant students may eventually “get involved in petty crime or bad groups.” Respondent 8 mentioned that frequent truants often “never return to school and end up as street vendors.” These responses demonstrate a direct link between habitual absenteeism and long-term educational and social challenges. Students were also aware of these risks. Group 2

remarked that truants may start engaging in “bad activities,” and Group 5 stated that truancy can lead to punishment, stress, and peer problems. Group 3 feared that frequent absenteeism could result in dropping out entirely, which would limit their future opportunities.

The data strongly confirm that truancy has detrimental effects on students’ academic performance and broader educational experience at Techiman Islamic Junior High School. It leads to poor test scores, diminished understanding of lessons, low classroom participation, emotional distress, and in many cases, eventual dropout or deviant behaviour.

Discussion of Findings on Research Question Two

The findings of the study clearly demonstrate that truancy negatively affects students’ academic outcome and educational attainment, a conclusion that is strongly supported by both the responses from participants and existing literature. Students, teachers, and headteachers identified multiple consequences of absenteeism, including poor test performance, difficulty in following lessons, decreased participation in class, and a higher likelihood of dropping out of school. These locally gathered insights are consistent with contemporary research on the academic and psychosocial impact of truancy. Also, the results of the chi-square test indicate that there is no statistically significant association between the two variables. This means that the frequency of truancy is not influenced by the gender of students at Techiman Islamic JHS. Both male and female students exhibit similar patterns of absenteeism, with the majority reporting truancy at varying frequencies. These findings suggest that while truancy is a significant issue, it is not differentiated by gender and affects both male and female students similarly.

A major effect identified was the decline in academic achievement. Teachers indicated that students who are regularly truant often fall behind in their studies and struggle to perform well in exams. For instance, Respondents 1, 3, and 5 all noted that truant students commonly fail to grasp key concepts, which leads to underperformance in assessments. These accounts are confirmed by the students themselves, with many acknowledging that their absence from school results in low test scores and difficulty understanding lessons. Focus Group 3, for example, reported, “I get low marks when I miss school because I don’t understand the assignments.” This aligns with the findings of Peng (2024) and Arslan (2019), who reported a statistically significant relationship between school absenteeism and reduced academic achievement, especially in math and reading comprehension. Their longitudinal study confirmed that students with higher rates of truancy scored considerably lower on standardised tests.

Beyond test scores, the study found that truancy impacts classroom participation and social integration. Both students and teachers observed that when students return from an absence, they often feel excluded or disconnected from the learning process. Focus Group 4 mentioned that “it affects how confident I feel in class,” while teachers explained that absentees find it difficult to reintegrate into ongoing lessons. This sense of exclusion can reduce motivation and classroom engagement. These findings are supported by Gottfried (2018), who emphasised that repeated absenteeism not only reduces exposure to academic content but also weakens students’ social ties with peers and teachers, thereby undermining classroom belonging and participation.

The long-term consequences of truancy also emerged as a key theme in the study. Teachers expressed concern that frequent absenteeism is often a precursor to permanent school dropout. Respondent 6 noted that “some become school dropouts,” and

Respondent 8 pointed out that habitual truants “end up as street vendors or fall into bad company.” These observations are corroborated by students in Focus Groups 2 and 5, who mentioned that truancy could lead to punishment, disengagement, and eventual exit from the school system. This reflects findings by Maynard et al. (2018), who concluded that truancy is a strong predictor of early school leaving and later academic failure. According to their research, absenteeism significantly increases the likelihood of students discontinuing their education, particularly in low-income contexts.

Moreover, the findings suggest that truancy creates a negative feedback loop, where poor academic performance reduces interest in school, leading to more absences and further academic decline. This cycle was reflected in the accounts of both students and teachers. Respondent 10 mentioned that “when students miss school, they fall behind and sometimes feel like giving up.” Focus Group 5 echoed this, noting that students feel overwhelmed and discouraged upon returning to class, often choosing to skip again. Lovelace, Reschly, and Appleton (2018) discussed this same loop, stating that frequent absences foster a sense of academic failure and hopelessness, which, if unaddressed, erodes educational aspirations.

The findings from this study provide clear evidence that truancy has far-reaching consequences on academic performance. Students who are frequently absent face a cascade of negative effects including missed lessons, low grades, social disengagement, and an increased risk of dropping out. These local insights align with international literature, including works by Peng (2024), Gottfried (2018), and Maynard et al. (2018), all of which establish truancy as a critical barrier to educational success.

Research Question Three

This subsection addresses Research Question 3: *What strategies can be implemented by the school authorities to reduce truancy and improve student attendance at the school?* It analysed the strategies suggested by the students and teachers for reducing truancy at Techiman Islamic Junior High School.

Table 12 presents students' suggested strategies for reducing truancy. The suggestions were collected as multiple-response items, meaning students could select more than one option, resulting in a total of 280 responses across the 97 participants.

Table 12 Students' Suggestions for Reducing Truancy

Suggestion	Responses	
	N	Percent
Free school meals	83	29.6%
Guidance and counselling	68	24.3%
Strict rules and punishment	25	8.9%
Support for needy students	86	30.7%
Engaging and interesting lessons	18	6.4%
Total	280	100.0%

Source: Field data (2024)

The most frequently cited solution was “Support for needy students,” which received 86 responses (30.7%). This overwhelming support highlights students' recognition of the financial barriers to education, such as inability to afford school materials, transport, or uniforms. The prominence of this suggestion aligns with earlier findings (e.g., Tables 7 and 8) that identified poverty and household responsibilities as major causes of truancy. Closely following is the suggestion for “Free school meals,” endorsed by 83

students (29.6%). This reflects the strong link between hunger, poor household income, and school attendance. In economically disadvantaged communities, school feeding programmes serve as incentives for regular attendance. “Guidance and counselling” received 68 responses (24.3%), indicating that many students recognise the value of emotional and psychological support. Students struggle with issues such as peer pressure, lack of motivation, or personal problems that lead to absenteeism.

On the lower end of the responses, “Strict rules and punishment” garnered 25 responses (8.9%), suggesting that punitive approaches are seen as less effective or less desirable by students. This implies that while discipline is important, students prefer more empathetic and supportive strategies over fear-based ones. Lastly, “Engaging and interesting lessons” had the fewest responses at 18 (6.4%), though still notable.

The results show that students favour supportive, welfare-based, and motivational strategies over punitive ones in addressing truancy.

Research Objective 3 seeks to explore practical and context-specific strategies to reduce truancy among students at Techiman Islamic Junior High School. Responses from teachers, headteachers, and students, as captured in the interview and focus group discussion transcripts, highlight a variety of school-based, home-based, and community-based solutions. The findings point toward the need for collaborative interventions that address both the causes and effects of absenteeism.

A key strategy suggested by both teachers and students was the improvement of school facilities and learning experiences. Respondent 1 proposed making lessons more engaging, while Respondent 8 recommended enhancing teacher-student relationships and training teachers in student-centered teaching. Students echoed this sentiment.

Focus Group 1 suggested that teachers should “make lessons more interesting,” and Group 3 recommended small rewards for regular attendance. These responses indicate that engaging instruction and positive reinforcement could motivate students to attend school more consistently. Additionally, multiple respondents mentioned strengthening attendance monitoring systems. Respondent 4 explained the use of an attendance tracking sheet, and Respondent 10 emphasised that regular contact with parents regarding absenteeism has been useful. Some students recommended “regular meetings with teachers to discuss problems,” showing that they desire more proactive communication and involvement in school life.

Another major theme was the role of parental involvement in reducing truancy. Respondents 2, 3, and 6 emphasised that truancy could be reduced if parents took a more active role in supervising their children’s school attendance. For instance, Respondent 6 stated, “parents should monitor and motivate their children.” Students in Focus Group 1 also supported this, noting that “parents should check on their children’s schoolwork,” while Group 3 mentioned that parents need to provide basic school needs like food and books.

Moreover, economic challenges were widely cited as a cause of truancy, and respondents proposed welfare-based solutions to address them. Respondent 9 advocated for government support in the form of feeding programmes and uniforms, while Respondent 8 suggested collaboration with NGOs to support needy families. Students strongly supported this view as well. Focus Group 5 recommended “help for poor students with uniforms and books,” and Focus Group 2 suggested “free food or snacks to motivate students.” These insights align with quantitative findings in Table 10 of the survey data, where support for needy students and free school meals were the

two most selected solutions. The consistency across data sources confirms the importance of social protection and incentive-based programmes in curbing truancy.

Furthermore, some responses highlighted the role of broader community and policy-level interventions. Respondents 7 and 10 suggested involving religious leaders and local chiefs in sensitisation campaigns. Respondent 1 even recommended community-based by-laws against truancy. Students agreed, with Group 2 and Group 5 proposing the involvement of community and religious leaders to promote the value of education. Also, Respondent 6 recommended introducing penalties for parents who neglect their children's education, while Respondent 8 emphasised policy reforms and poverty reduction efforts as long-term solutions. These responses reflect a shared understanding that reducing truancy requires multi-stakeholder collaboration, including families, educators, local authorities, and policymakers.

The analysis reveals that stakeholders believe truancy can be effectively addressed through a combination of school-centered interventions (engaging teaching, monitoring, and support systems), parental engagement, economic support for students, and community participation. Teachers and students alike emphasise the need for a supportive, not punitive, environment that motivates learners to attend school. These responses offer a practical roadmap for reducing truancy and improving student attendance at Techiman Islamic Junior High School.

Discussion of Findings on Research Objective Three

The findings from interviews, focus group discussions, and student questionnaire data revealed several practical strategies for reducing truancy at Techiman Islamic Junior High School. These strategies are clustered around four broad themes: school-based interventions, parental involvement, economic support, and community or policy

engagement. These align closely with existing empirical literature, reinforcing the view that addressing truancy requires a multi-faceted, collaborative approach tailored to the local context.

Teachers and students strongly advocated for improvements within the school environment to encourage regular attendance. Key suggestions included making lessons more engaging and student-centered, improving teacher-student relationships, and implementing regular guidance and counselling services. Students, especially those in Focus Groups 1 and 3, emphasised the need for interesting and interactive lessons that capture their attention. Similarly, teachers noted that uninspiring or overly rigid teaching styles often contribute to student disengagement and absenteeism. These recommendations echo findings from Keppens and Spruyt (2018), who argue that schools that foster inclusive, participatory, and emotionally supportive learning environments tend to experience lower truancy rates. Additionally, Finning et al. (2019) emphasise that teacher attitudes and classroom engagement significantly influence students' emotional connection to school and their attendance behaviours. Establishing student support systems such as mentorship and counselling is especially vital in low-resource schools, where emotional and psychological challenges often go unaddressed.

Another critical strategy highlighted by both teachers and students was the active involvement of parents in monitoring and encouraging school attendance. Teachers explained that truancy often persists when parents show little interest in their child's academic life. Respondents in the interviews called for stronger parent-teacher collaboration, regular communication, and parental education on the importance of schooling. Students also recognised the value of supportive parenting, stating that when parents check their homework or provide encouragement, they are more likely to attend

school regularly. These insights align with Saudi et al. (2021), who found that parental monitoring and involvement are significant predictors of student attendance. In particular, when parents are engaged in educational activities or maintain open communication with teachers, truancy rates drop. Amankwah (2020) also stress that awareness campaigns and regular parent-teacher conferences can strengthen accountability and community ownership of school attendance efforts.

Perhaps the most widely supported strategy across all respondent groups was the provision of financial and material support to needy students. Suggestions included school feeding programmes, the supply of learning materials, and scholarships for vulnerable learners. Both teachers and students expressed that many absences are linked directly to poverty-related challenges, including the inability to afford food, uniforms, or transport fare. This recommendation is strongly supported by empirical evidence. According to Agyire-Tettey et al. (2021), providing economic incentives such as free school meals significantly improves attendance, especially in impoverished communities. Similarly, Appiah (2024) found that the implementation of Ghana's School Feeding Programme led to an increase in enrolment and daily attendance, confirming the effectiveness of such interventions in reducing truancy.

Finally, participants called for greater community involvement and policy enforcement to address truancy. Teachers suggested involving religious leaders, local chiefs, and even law enforcement to sensitise families on the value of education and discourage practices that lead to absenteeism. Respondent 1 recommended community-based by-laws that hold parents accountable for persistent absenteeism, while others proposed closer collaboration with NGOs and social workers. This aligns with findings by Maynard et al. (2018), who argue that truancy prevention is most effective when

communities adopt a whole-system approach including schools, families, local government, and civil society. Zhang et al. (2020) also emphasise the value of community-based interventions that focus not only on punishment but also on support, outreach, and resource provision for at-risk families.

The findings of this study strongly suggest that reducing truancy at Techiman Islamic Junior High School requires a combination of school reforms, parental involvement, economic support mechanisms, and community-level collaboration. These proposed strategies are not only contextually relevant but also strongly supported by recent literature, including works by Keppens and Spruyt (2018), Agyire-Tettey et al. (2021), and Maynard et al. (2018).

4.3 Summary of Key Findings

This study investigated the phenomenon of truancy at Techiman Islamic Junior High School, with a focus on identifying its causes, examining its effects on academic performance, and exploring strategies for its reduction. The findings revealed that truancy is a significant issue affecting a large proportion of students and is driven by a complex mix of socio-economic, familial, institutional, and individual factors. Quantitative data from students, along with qualitative insights from teachers, headteachers, and focus group discussions, provided a holistic understanding of the problem.

Regarding the causes of truancy, the study found that the most dominant factors include poverty, household responsibilities, lack of parental supervision, and poor school engagement. Many students miss school because they are required to help their families through farming, trading, or other domestic chores. Financial constraints, particularly

lack of money for food, transport, and school supplies, also emerged as major barriers. Additionally, negative school experiences such as boring lessons, harsh treatment by teachers, and overcrowded classrooms contributed to absenteeism. Peer influence and lack of interest in school further reinforced non-attendance in some cases.

The effects of truancy on academic performance were profound. Truant students often performed poorly in tests, had difficulty understanding lessons, and exhibited reduced confidence and participation in class. Teachers observed that these students frequently fell behind and, in some cases, dropped out altogether. Students admitted to feeling left out or demoralised when they returned after missing school, leading to a cycle of disengagement and further absenteeism. These academic challenges were not only cognitive but also emotional, affecting students' motivation and classroom relationships.

To address these issues, the study identified several strategies for reducing truancy. Students and teachers recommended interventions such as free school meals, support for needy students, regular guidance and counselling, and improved teaching methods. Parental involvement was also highlighted as critical, with calls for better home-school collaboration and community engagement. Additionally, broader structural solutions such as community sensitisation, policy enforcement, and partnerships with NGOs were suggested. These findings emphasise the need for a coordinated, multi-level approach involving schools, families, communities, and policymakers to effectively tackle truancy and its underlying causes.

4.4 Linking Findings to the Theories Used in the Study

The theoretical framework in this study, composed of Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory and Travis Hirschi's Social Control Theory, provided a robust foundation for interpreting the findings on truancy at Techiman Islamic Junior High School. These theories guided the analysis of the multi-layered factors contributing to truancy and helped structure the interpretation of the results, offering insights into how different environmental, relational, and institutional factors interact to influence student absenteeism.

Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory emphasises that a child's behavior and development are shaped by interactions within and between multiple environmental systems. These include the microsystem (e.g., family, school, peers), mesosystem (the interaction between microsystems), exosystem (extended family, community), macrosystem (cultural values, policies), and chronosystem (life events over time). The study's findings strongly align with this theory, as various levels of the ecological system were identified as contributors to truancy. At the microsystem level, family-related issues such as poverty, parental neglect, and domestic labour demands were found to be significant causes of truancy. Many students missed school due to the necessity of helping with household chores or engaging in income-generating activities, particularly in semi-urban areas like Techiman. This finding aligns with Bronfenbrenner's assertion that family dynamics directly influence children's behaviours and attitudes toward school.

The mesosystem, which refers to the interactions between different parts of the microsystem, was also clearly visible in the study. The findings revealed that when parents were disengaged from their children's schooling, often due to economic

challenges or a lack of educational value, truancy was exacerbated. The exosystem also played a role, particularly when students' communities lacked sufficient educational support services or when cultural attitudes toward education were not conducive to regular school attendance. Finally, at the macrosystem level, factors like child labour and societal attitudes toward formal education reinforced absenteeism. These results underscore how truancy is a product of multiple interrelated environments, reflecting Bronfenbrenner's assertion that no single factor determines a child's behavior but rather the complex interaction of these systems.

On the other hand, Travis Hirschi's Social Control Theory posits that individuals are less likely to engage in deviant behaviour, such as truancy, when they have strong bonds to society, particularly through attachment, commitment, involvement, and belief. The study's findings support this theory, as students who lacked strong attachment to their teachers or parents were more likely to be truant. This included students who reported experiencing neglect, harsh treatment, or poor communication at home or in school. These weak attachment bonds to key social figures led to disengagement from school and an increased likelihood of absenteeism.

Additionally, students with low commitment to academic success and lack of involvement in school activities or lessons reported higher rates of truancy. Many students expressed that school was either boring or irrelevant, reflecting a lack of internalization of the belief in the value of education, a core component of Hirschi's theory. Conversely, students who felt supported by their teachers and parents, and those involved in school activities, were more consistent in their attendance. These findings reinforce Hirschi's assertion that weak social bonds, particularly with parents, teachers, and the school community, lead to deviant behaviour like truancy.

The integration of Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory and Hirschi's Social Control Theory provided a comprehensive understanding of the causes of truancy at Techiman Islamic Junior High School. While Bronfenbrenner's theory captures the broader socio-environmental context influencing student attendance, Hirschi's theory highlights the importance of personal and institutional relationships in promoting or deterring truancy. Together, these theories offered valuable insights into the multifactorial nature of absenteeism and suggest that addressing truancy at Techiman Islamic Junior High School required interventions that strengthen both the social bonds students have with their families, teachers, and school, as well as addressing the wider socio-economic and cultural factors that shape their behaviours.



CHAPTER FIVE:

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Introduction

This chapter presents a comprehensive summary of the major findings from the study on the phenomenon of truancy at Techiman Islamic Junior High School, highlighting the key causes, effects on academic performance, and strategies proposed by stakeholders to address the issue. It draws conclusions based on the data collected from students, teachers, and headteachers, and connects these insights to the study's theoretical framework and research objectives. Furthermore, the chapter outlines practical recommendations aimed at reducing truancy, improving student engagement, and fostering collaboration among school authorities, parents, and the wider community. These recommendations are intended to inform policy decisions and interventions that can enhance student attendance and academic outcomes.

5.2 Summary of Findings

5.2.1 Research Objectives

Three research objectives were formulated to guide the study. They were to:

- i. examine the causes of truancy among the students at the Techiman Islamic Junior High School.
- ii. examine the effects of truancy on students' academic outcome and educational attainment.
- iii. propose strategies that can be implemented in the Techiman Islamic Junior High School to improve school attendance.

5.2.2 Research Procedure

The study was conducted to assess the underlying causes, prevalence, and effects of truancy among students at the Techiman Islamic Junior High School. The stratified and purposive sampling techniques were used to select the respondents. Stratified sampling ensured that the student sample represented different classes and age groups whilst purposive sampling was applied in selecting teachers and the headteacher.

Data collection was carried out using a combination of quantitative and qualitative instruments. A structured questionnaire was administered to 97 students, focusing on demographic information, causes of truancy, frequency of absenteeism, and its effects on academic performance. In addition, semi-structured interview guides were used to collect data from 10 teachers and the headteacher. These interviews provided detailed narratives on patterns of absenteeism, its academic implications, and suggested solutions. To complement this, five focus group discussions involving six to eight students each were conducted to gather shared experiences and group perspectives on truancy.

Prior to data collection, the researcher obtained permission from the school authorities and explained the purpose of the study to participants. Ethical considerations such as confidentiality, anonymity, and voluntary participation were upheld throughout the process. Completed questionnaires were collected immediately after administration to ensure a high response rate, while interviews and focus groups were audio-recorded and supplemented with notes. This combination of procedures provided reliable and comprehensive data for the analysis of truancy within the school context.

5.2.3 Major Findings

- i. The study revealed that truancy at Techiman Islamic Junior High School is caused by a complex interaction of personal, familial, institutional, and societal factors. At the personal level, students admitted that lack of interest in school, peer influence, and boredom with lessons often contributed to their absenteeism. Familial factors played an even greater role, with poverty, inadequate parental supervision, and household responsibilities emerging as key drivers of truancy. Some parents were found to keep their children at home to assist with farming, trading, or other domestic chores. Institutional factors also contributed significantly, as students cited harsh disciplinary practices, uninspiring teaching methods, overcrowded classrooms, and inadequate teaching and learning resources as reasons for skipping school. Beyond the family and school environment, societal issues such as cultural practices that undervalue education and economic demands that encourage child labour further exacerbated the problem.
- ii. The study also established that truancy has profound negative effects on students' academic performance and long-term educational attainment. Students who were frequently absent from school performed poorly in assessments and examinations due to missed instructional hours and incomplete assignments. Truancy was also found to undermine student engagement and participation, as those who missed school often felt left out, disconnected, and less confident when they returned to class. Teachers confirmed that these students became disengaged, which made it difficult to reintegrate them into the learning process. Over time, persistent absenteeism was linked to long-term

academic failure and a high risk of dropping out of school altogether, thereby limiting students' future educational and career opportunities.

- iii. The study identified several strategies for addressing truancy, many of which were suggested by students, teachers, and the headteacher. Among the most commonly proposed solutions were the provision of free school meals, financial support for needy students in the form of uniforms, textbooks, and transport allowances, as well as the establishment of regular guidance and counselling services. Strengthening parental involvement emerged as another critical strategy, with respondents emphasising the importance of closer supervision, encouragement, and collaboration between parents and teachers. At the broader level, community-based interventions such as sensitization programmes by chiefs, religious leaders, and NGOs, coupled with stricter policy enforcement, were recommended as necessary measures to reduce absenteeism and reinforce the value of education in the Techiman community.

5.3 Conclusions

- i. The study concludes that truancy among students at Techiman Islamic Junior High School is caused by a wide range of interconnected factors spanning personal, familial, institutional, and societal dimensions. On a personal level, lack of interest in schooling, boredom with lessons, and peer influence significantly contribute to absenteeism. Familial issues such as poverty, poor parental supervision, and the demand for children to engage in household chores or income-generating activities further aggravate the problem. Additionally, school-related challenges, including uninspiring teaching methods, harsh disciplinary practices, inadequate teaching and learning resources, and overcrowded classrooms, create conditions that discourage students from

regular attendance. At the societal level, cultural practices that downplay the importance of education and the economic pressures that encourage child labour perpetuate the issue. These findings indicate that truancy is not a result of a single factor but rather a multifaceted problem that requires comprehensive intervention.

- ii. The study also concludes that truancy has a direct and negative impact on students' academic outcomes and long-term educational attainment. Students who miss school frequently perform poorly in examinations and assessments, mainly because they lose valuable instructional time and struggle to complete assignments. The findings further show that truancy undermines student engagement and participation, as absentees often feel disconnected from classroom activities, experience a loss of confidence, and find it difficult to catch up with their peers. Over time, these challenges can create a cycle of academic disengagement, resulting in persistent absenteeism and, in some cases, permanent school dropout. Consequently, truancy not only limits students' immediate academic performance but also poses serious risks to their future opportunities and socio-economic mobility.
- iii. The final conclusion is that effective strategies for reducing truancy must be multifaceted and collaborative. The study highlights the importance of providing welfare support, such as free school meals, uniforms, textbooks, and transport subsidies, to relieve the economic burden faced by many families. Strengthening parental involvement is also essential, as closer supervision, motivation, and monitoring of children's academic progress were identified as key to reducing absenteeism. Moreover, school-based interventions, including improved guidance and counselling services and the adoption of more engaging

teaching methods, are critical to sustaining student interest in education. At the community level, sensitization programmes led by chiefs, religious leaders, and NGOs, along with policy enforcement, can play an important role in reinforcing the value of education and discouraging practices that fuel absenteeism. The study thus concludes that addressing truancy requires a holistic and coordinated effort involving schools, families, communities, and policymakers working together to ensure regular attendance and improved academic outcomes.

5.4 Recommendations

Based on the conclusions and major findings of the study, the following recommendations are proposed to address the issue of truancy at Techiman Islamic Junior High School:

- i. It is recommended that the authorities of the school and the Techiman Municipal Education Directorate should prioritise the improvement of internal support structures by enhancing guidance and counselling services, as well as adopting more student-centered and participatory teaching methods. By making lessons more engaging, interactive, and relevant to students' daily lives, the school can foster greater motivation and interest in learning. This approach will help reduce boredom, encourage regular attendance, and sustain students' commitment to academic progress.
- ii. Stakeholders such as the government, non-governmental organisations (NGOs), and community leaders should collaborate to provide targeted financial and material support to economically disadvantaged students in Techiman Islamic JHS. Initiatives such as free school meals, the supply of uniforms and textbooks, and transportation subsidies should be implemented to alleviate the financial

burdens that frequently lead to absenteeism. Addressing these economic barriers will ensure that students from low-income households can attend school consistently without interruption.

- iii. The school should intensify efforts to involve parents in their children's education by organising regular parent education programmes and strengthening Parent-Teacher Association (PTA) activities. These initiatives should focus on sensitizing parents to the value of consistent school attendance and equipping them with strategies for monitoring and supporting their children's academic progress. Parents should also be held accountable for unexplained absences, thereby reinforcing their role as key partners in combating truancy.
- iv. Community leaders, religious authorities, and local government representatives should work closely with schools to promote community-wide awareness of the negative effects of truancy on long-term academic and socio-economic outcomes.
- v. Given the strong influence of the community on students' behaviours and attitudes, it is crucial for Techiman Islamic JHS to engage local leaders in the fight against truancy. Religious authorities, local chiefs, and community leaders should work closely with the school to raise awareness about the detrimental effects of truancy on long-term academic and socio-economic outcomes. Community sensitization campaigns should emphasise the importance of education, while local by-laws or informal agreements could be introduced to discourage child labour and ensure children's school attendance. Strengthening community ownership of education will create an enabling environment where schooling is prioritised and supported by all stakeholders.

5.5 Suggestions for Further Research

Future research could explore the long-term academic and social outcomes of students who engage in chronic truancy within the Techiman Municipality. Additionally, comparative studies between urban and rural junior high schools could provide deeper insights into how contextual factors influence truancy patterns and intervention effectiveness.



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APPENDICES

Questionnaire

AN INVESTIGATION INTO THE PHENOMENON OF TRUANCY AT TECHIMAN ISLAMIC JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL

Dear Respondent,

This questionnaire is designed to collect data for a study on an investigation into the phenomenon of truancy at Techiman Islamic JHS. Your responses will remain anonymous and will be used solely for academic research. Please answer all questions honestly.

Thank you for your cooperation.

Section A: Demographic Information

Please tick (✓) the appropriate response.

1. Age (years): 10-12 13-15 Above
2. Gender: Male Female
3. Class/Form: JHS 1 JHS 2 JHS 3
4. Who do you live with? Both parents Single parent
 Guardian Alone
5. What is the main occupation of your parent/guardian?
 Farming Trading Teaching
 Unemployed Other (Please specify):

Section B: Frequency of Truancy

6. How often do you absent yourself from school without permission?
 Never
 Rarely (1-2 times per term)
 Sometimes (3-5 times per term)
 Frequently (More than 5 times per term)
7. What is your main reason for not attending school when absent? (*Choose the most applicable*)
 Sickness
 Household chores
 Financial problems
 Lack of interest in school

- Peer influence
- Other (Please specify):

Section C: Causes of Truancy

Please tick (✓) the response that best reflects your opinion. Use the scale below:

SA = Strongly Agree; A = Agree; D = Disagree; SD = Strongly Disagree

Statement	SA	A	D	SD
8. I skip school because I find lessons boring.				
9. My parents sometimes ask me to miss school to help at home.				
10. I avoid school because some teachers are too harsh.				
11. I do not attend school regularly because I have no transport fare.				
12. I am influenced by friends who also skip school.				

Section D: Effects of Truancy on Academic Performance

Statement	SA	A	D	SD
13. Missing school affects my understanding of lessons.				
14. Truancy has caused me to perform poorly in exams.				
15. I feel left out when I return after being absent.				
16. My relationship with teachers is affected when I skip classes.				

Section E: Suggestions and Solutions

17. What do you think can help reduce truancy in your school? (*Tick all that apply*)

- Free school meals
- Guidance and counselling
- Strict rules and punishment
- Support for needy students
- Engaging and interesting lessons

Interview Guide

AN INVESTIGATION INTO THE PHENOMENON OF TRUANCY AT TECHIMAN ISLAMIC JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL

Introduction to the Interview:

Thank you for agreeing to participate in this interview. The aim of this discussion is to gather insights about the issue of truancy in your school. Your responses will be used for academic purposes only and will be treated with strict confidentiality. There are no right or wrong answers: just your honest opinions and experiences.

Section A: Background Information

1. What is your current role in the school?
2. How many years have you been teaching or managing this school?
3. What subjects or responsibilities do you handle in the school?

Section B: Incidence and Patterns of Truancy

4. In your experience, how prevalent is truancy among students in this school?
5. What trends or patterns have you observed with respect to absenteeism (e.g., particular days, age groups, or classes)?
6. Which students (e.g., gender, age, background) are more likely to engage in truancy?

Section C: Causes of Truancy

7. What do you think are the major reasons students absent themselves from school without permission?
8. Do socio-economic factors (e.g., poverty, home responsibilities, parental care) contribute to truancy in your opinion? Please explain.
9. To what extent do school-related factors like teaching methods, teacher-student relationships, or school environment influence truancy?

Section D: Effects of Truancy

10. What impact do you think truancy has on students' academic performance and behaviour?
11. Have you noticed long-term effects (e.g., dropouts, delinquency) in students who frequently skip school?
12. How does truancy affect your teaching and the overall school climate?

Section E: Interventions and Recommendations

13. What measures has the school taken to address truancy among students?
14. How effective have these strategies been in reducing absenteeism?
15. What support do you think the school, parents, or the community should provide to curb truancy?

16. Can you suggest any specific policy changes or interventions that might help reduce truancy in this school?

Closing Remarks

17. Is there anything else you would like to add about truancy in your school or what can be done to address it?



Focus Group Discussion Guide

AN INVESTIGATION INTO THE PHENOMENON OF TRUANCY AT TECHIMAN ISLAMIC JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL

Introduction

Thank you for participating in this focus group discussion. The purpose of this session is to gather your views and experiences about truancy in your school. Your responses will remain confidential and will be used solely for academic research. Please feel free to express your honest opinions: there are no right or wrong answers.

Section A: Understanding Truancy

1. What does truancy mean to you?
2. Have you or your classmates ever missed school without permission? Why?
3. How common do you think truancy is in your school?

Section B: Causes of Truancy

4. What are some reasons students do not attend school regularly?
5. Are there family issues that contribute to absenteeism? Can you explain?
6. Do any school-related issues (like bullying, difficult subjects, or teacher attitudes) influence students to skip school?
7. How do your friends or peers influence your decision to attend or skip school?

Section C: Effects of Truancy

8. What do you think happens to students who are frequently truant?
9. How does missing school affect your academic performance or ability to keep up with lessons?
10. Do you think truancy can lead to other problems (e.g., punishment, dropout, or trouble at home)?

Section D: Solutions to Truancy

11. What can the school do to help reduce truancy among students?
12. What support do students need from teachers or parents to attend school regularly?
13. Do you have any suggestions or ideas that could help stop truancy in your school?

Closing

Thank you once again for sharing your thoughts. Your input is very important and will help improve efforts to reduce truancy in your school.

Reliability Analysis

Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.76	17

